



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

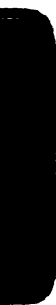
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

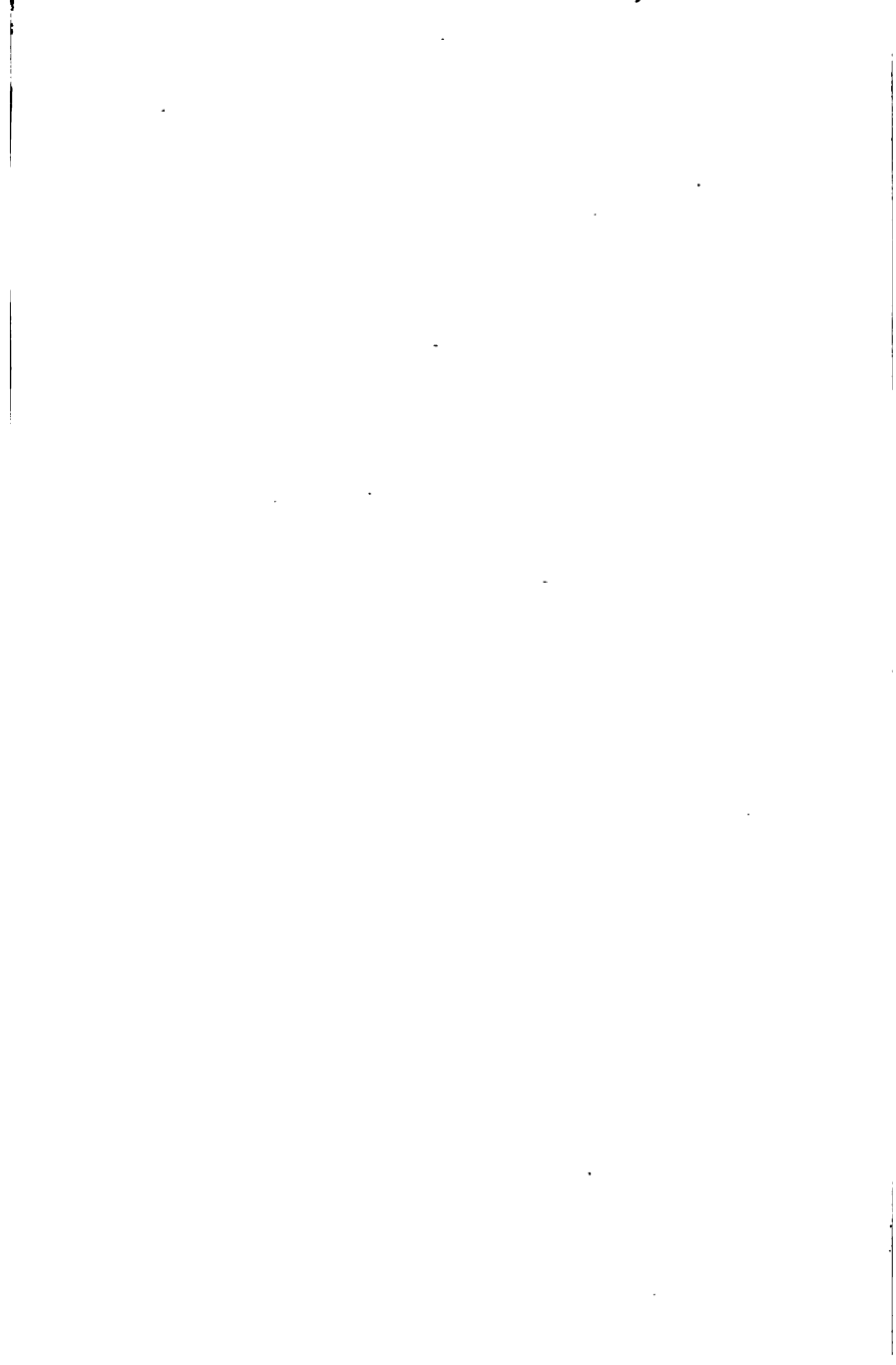
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

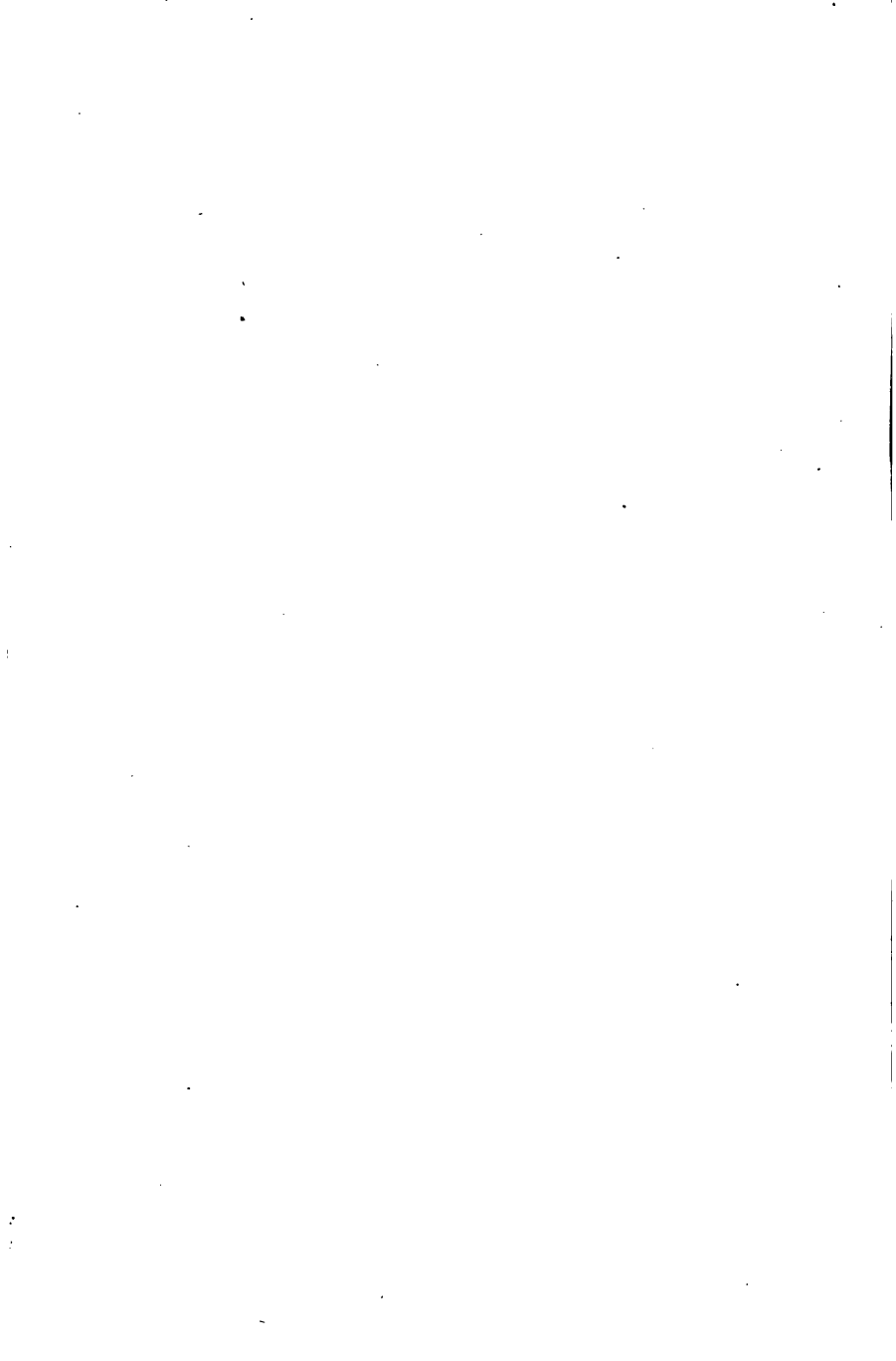
THE HARRINGTONS  
AND SELECT POETRY

*LAVINIA C. M. FORBES*











# THE HARRINGTONS.





# THE HARRINGTONS;

AND

## Select Poetry

BY

LAVINIA C. M. FORBES.

---

"My brother, art thou humble and unknown?  
The stars and flowers are part of one high plan,  
Each human heart is linked to God's great throne."

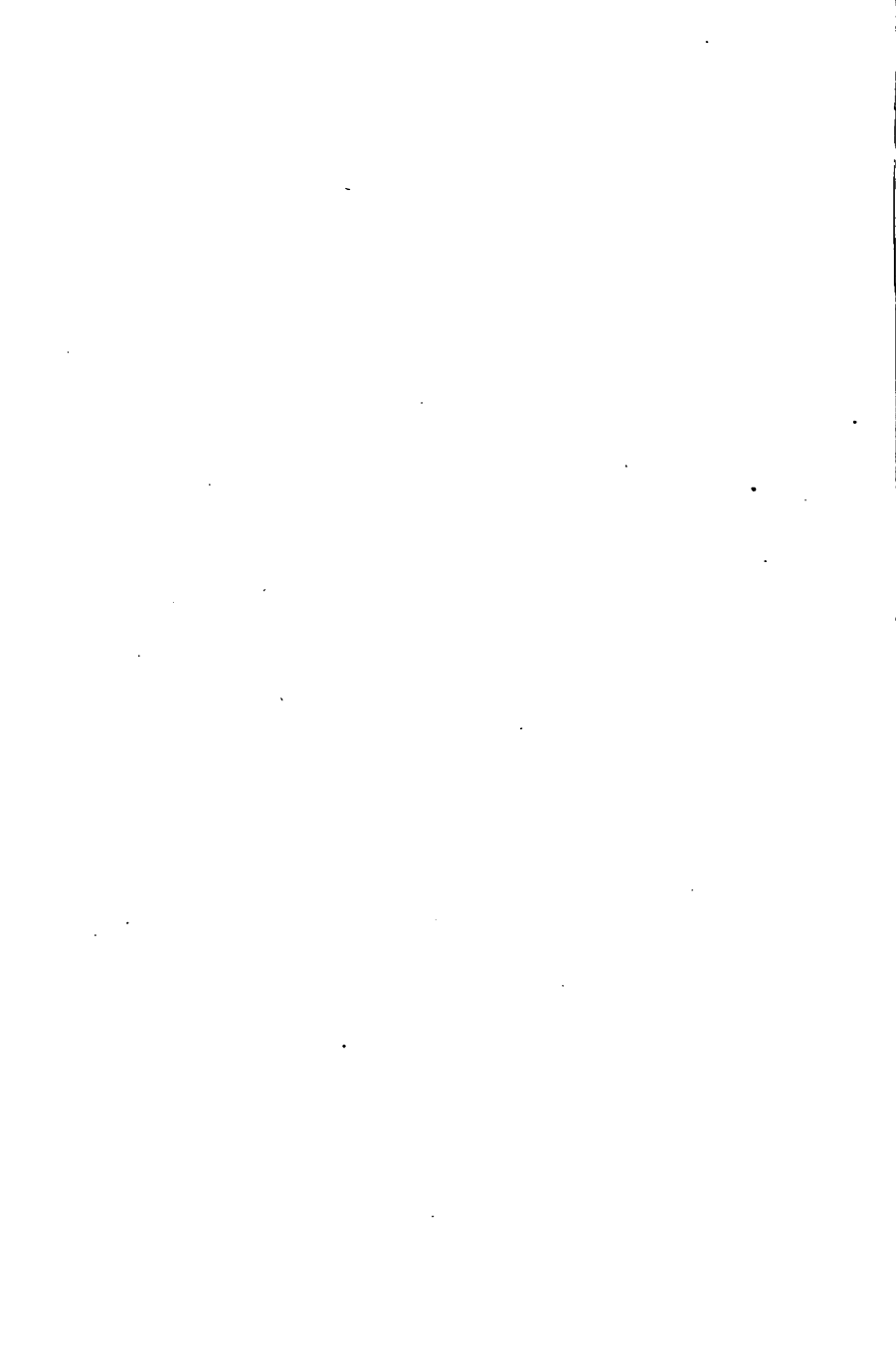
---

Glasgow

PRINTED BY PICKERING & INGLIS, 73 BOTHWELL STREET.

---

1894



# CONTENTS

---

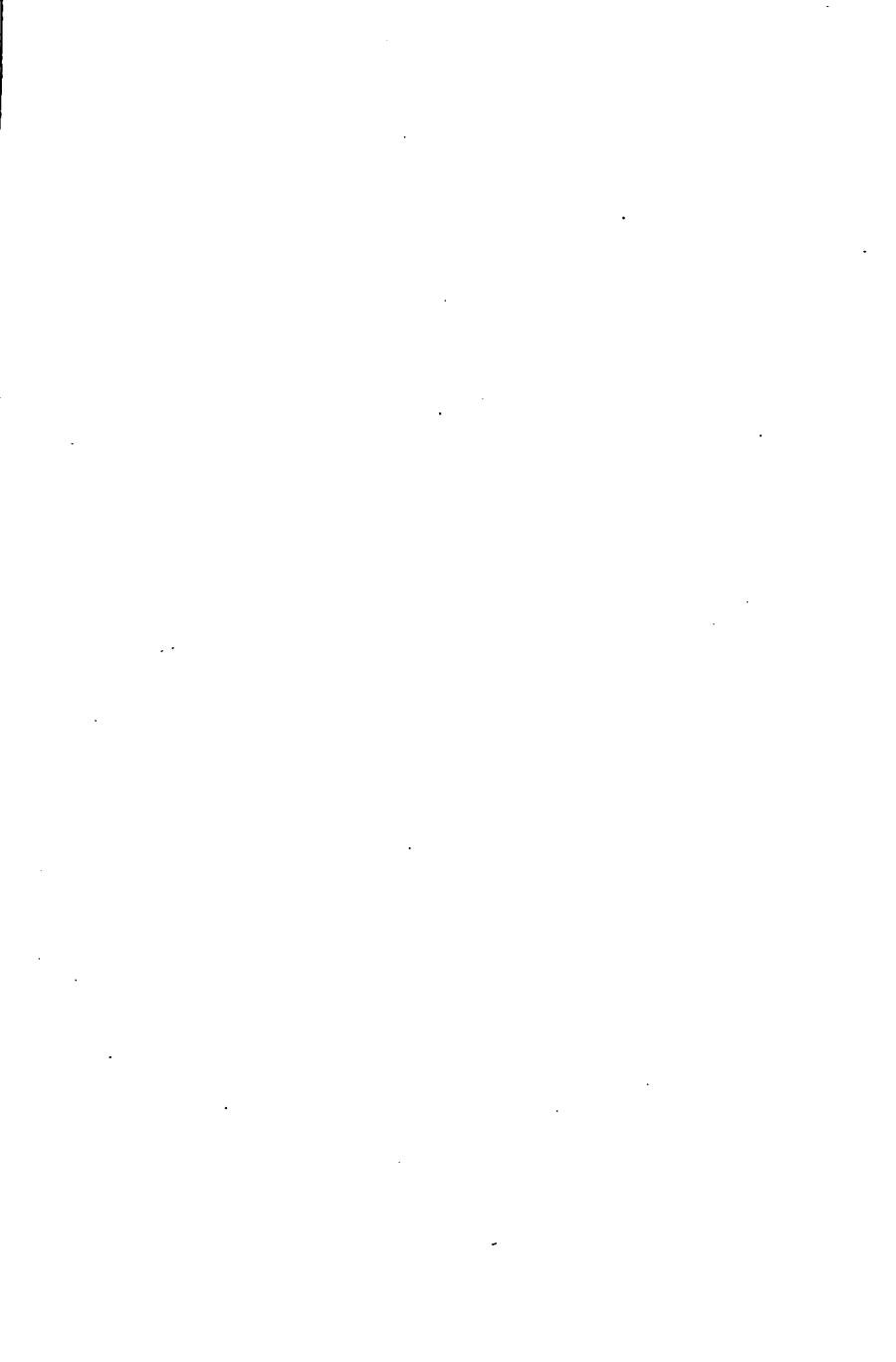
	PAGE
CHAPTER I.	
THE SISTERS, . . . . .	9
CHAPTER II.	
MR. AND MRS. HARRINGTON, . . . . .	13
CHAPTER III.	
MABEL, . . . . .	17
CHAPTER IV.	
MR. HARRINGTON'S SCHEME TO REACH THE MASSES, . . . . .	21
CHAPTER V.	
MR. HARRINGTON'S CONVERSION, . . . . .	26
CHAPTER VI.	
MABEL BECOMES REBELLIOUS, . . . . .	28
CHAPTER VII.	
MR. RATHBONE, . . . . .	31
CHAPTER VIII.	
VERA, . . . . .	34
CHAPTER IX.	
ERNEST RENTOULL, . . . . .	39
CHAPTER X.	
THE YOUNG GRADUATE MAKES A START, . . . . .	43
CHAPTER XI.	
ERNEST MATRICULATES IN THE SCHOOL OF EXPERIENCE, . . . . .	47

	PAGE
CHAPTER XII.	
ON THE SUMMIT OF ARTHUR'S SEAT, . . . ,	51
CHAPTER XIII.	
THE SEASONS—A DIGRESSION, . . . .	56
CHAPTER XIV.	
EDEN HERMITAGE: IN THE ARBOUR, . . .	58
CHAPTER XV.	
AT DINNER WITH THE RATHBONES, . . .	75
CHAPTER XVI.	
"GOOD-BYE," . . . . .	71
CHAPTER XVII.	
SELF-INTROSPECTION, . . . , . . .	78
CHAPTER XVIII.	
"THE SNUG," MABEL AND VERA, . . . .	87
CHAPTER XIX.	
INGRAFTED, . . . . .	96
CHAPTER XX.	
MABEL OBJECTS TO JOIN THE CHURCH, . . .	102
CHAPTER XXI.	
THE TWO PRODIGALS, . . . . .	107
CHAPTER XXII.	
MAISMORE MANSION, . . . . .	114
CHAPTER XXIII.	
ERNEST'S "SKELETON," . . . . .	119
CHAPTER XXIV.	
PROFESSOR BOND, . . . . .	122
CHAPTER XXV.	
"FOR EVER WITH THE LORD," . . . . .	130
CHAPTER XXVI.	
THE CHURCH ON THE ROCK, . . . . .	137

## POETRY.

---

	PAGE
TO REV. D. WITTON JENKINS,    -    -    -    -	147
HUMAN LOVE,    -    -    -    -    -    -    -	148
DOUBT,    -    -    -    -    -    -    -	149
I LONG FOR THE BEAUTIFUL SUMMER,    -    -	150
I <i>LONGED</i> FOR THE BEAUTIFUL SUMMER,    -    -	151
THE BIRDS, -    -    -    -    -    -    -	152
MY BIRTHDAY,    -    -    -    -    -    -    -	153
BABY'S LULLABY (DOROTHY),    -    -    -    -	155
"MERRY CHRISTMAS," -    -    -    -    -    -	156
A PARABLE DEDICATED TO THE PASTOR OF THE	
CHURCH ON THE ROCK,    -    -    -    -	158
TO MY SISTER ON HER BIRTHDAY,    -    -    -	164
IN THE MOONLIGHT,    -    -    -    -    -    -	166
WE'RE WEDDED NOW FOR EVER,    -    -    -    -	167
BEAUTIFUL BABE OF MY LOVE,    -    -    -    -	168
"SCUDIE,"    -    -    -    -    -    -    -	170



## PREFACE.

---

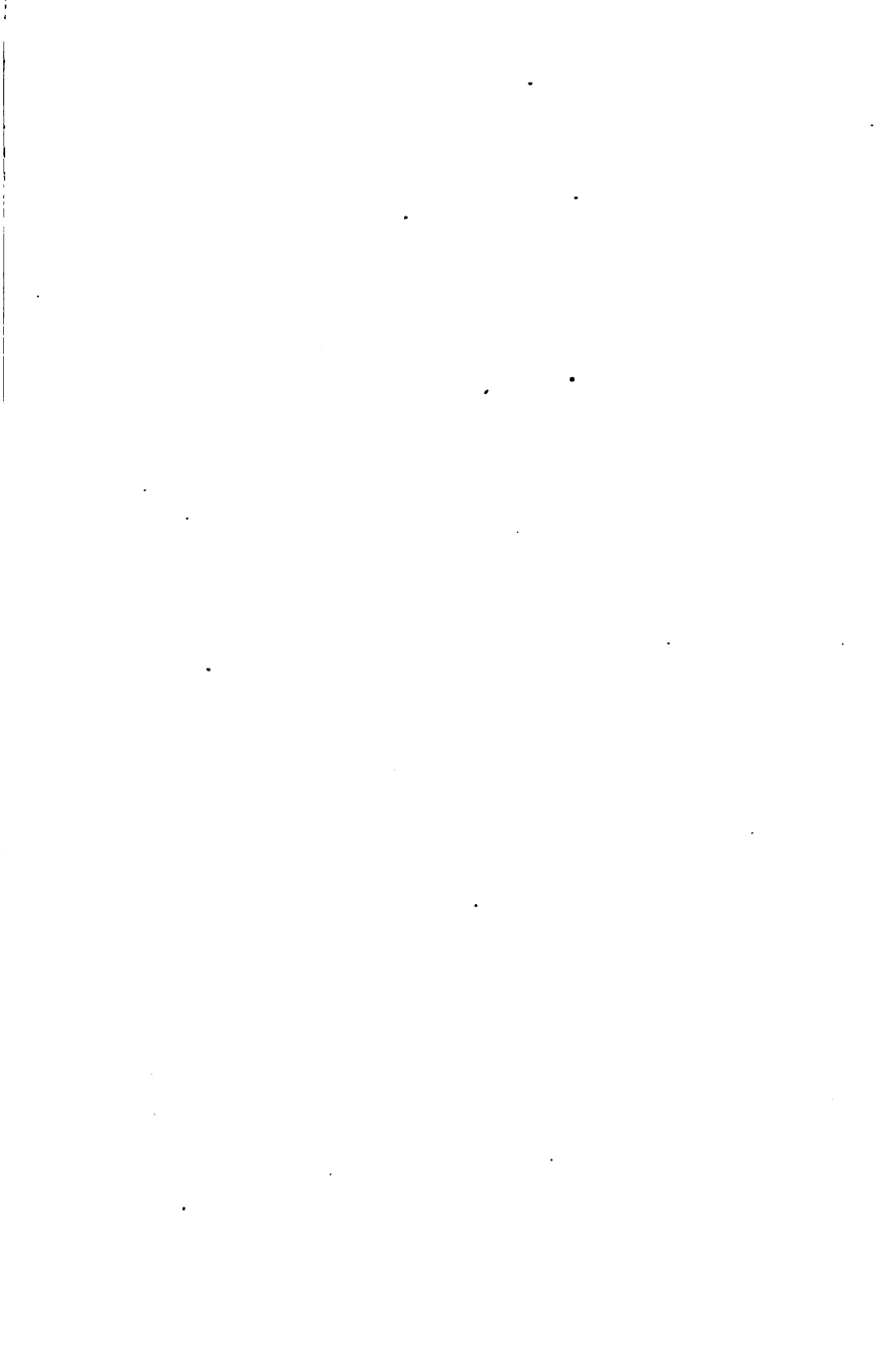
THE world is full of strange extremes and seeming contradictions. Beauty and deformity, weakness and power, evil and good, are strangely mixed together,—provoking wonder and doubt in the heart of man. Yet through the whole creation twines the golden thread of Christ's love, linking the delicate fragrant rose and the cruel thorn; the beggar in his rags, the king upon his throne, and the prisoner in his cell, to the Cross of a crucified Lord; twining in all and through all up to its source—the heart of God. Only those who fail to grasp the golden tracing thread of Christ's love will own defeat and dare to name God's glorious universe a failure.

Humanity has no real foundation for happiness here or hereafter but Christ.

If society has its seasons of fashions, so also has the Church. To doubt is fashionable. Men allow themselves to be crippled by prejudice, blinded by dogmatism. Self-conceit often passes for cleverness, and to profess to know more than Jesus Christ passes for courage.

'The Harringtons' is a true story. The reader need not look for startling incident, but it will be found to be interesting and the authoress hopes helpful.







# THE HARRINGTONS.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### *THE SISTERS:*

*A Part of the Vine, and a Separate Branch.*

“SO you will not come to the prayer meeting to-night, Mabel?”

“No, Dolly, it is too great a strain on my nervous system. Oh, spare me! I shall never forget the last; how Mr. Jones grumbled a prayer of discontent, in a double bass voice, which was followed, almost before he could pronounce the ‘Amen,’ by a whining petition, pitched in a high treble key, compelling me to look round—I was so curious to see if the individual was as thin as his voice. And my composure nearly forsook me when the third individual made an assault at the gates of heaven, using his fists as battering rams and bullying with a voice like

thunder, as if all the angels were deaf; and, really, I felt quite eerie at the mysterious sighs and groans which every now and then issued from various parts of the room. I cannot vouch for my good behaviour, if I go again, and I should certainly disgrace you. Besides, I promised Mr. Rathbone I would be present, with Vera, at the rehearsal in their church. We hope to produce the charade at the next social meeting. The rehearsals are great fun."

"Do you think you are justified in turning God's house into a place of amusement, Mabel?"

"Well, you dear little Puritan, our meetings are not exactly in the church, but in the hall behind. If the rehearsal is over in good time, Vera says we are going to have a dance."

"Mabel, my precious sister, I am very unhappy since you have got entangled with those Unitarians; you are gradually growing less inclined for our own dear Church. First you gave up the Sunday evening service, and now the prayer meeting. It is a very small link which binds you to us."

"Not so small as it is irksome, Dolly; made of iron, I think, and sometimes very rusty and sharp, cutting into my tender flesh, keeping open little wounds which would otherwise be healed. That terrible 'small link' is you, 'Mousie.'"

"I thought so, poor Mabel; if you have no love for Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church, no faith in Him as our Redeemer and atoning Lord, no wonder we cannot hold you, darling. I believe earnestly in prayer, and I will pray God to open your eyes to the truth as it is in Jesus."

"Sweet sister, I can dispense with your pity. I nearly

lose patience when you say 'poor Mabel.' Only that I know *you* are sincere, and really believe what you say, I should be very hard on your narrow-minded, bigoted, selfish Christians, who go about, like the Pharisee, thanking God that they are not like other men; telling people, whose character can bear the closest scrutiny, that they are going to perdition because they don't believe in the *blood* of Christ. I believe in the *love* and example of Jesus, and worship God as He—our Brother—has taught us, and through good deeds and self-control, work out my own salvation.

"There now, Dolly, I see I have awakened in you righteous horror. Forgive me, dearest; you are so lovely, so good and sincere, that I can say with Agrippa, 'thou almost persuadest me to be a Christian.' But oh, how few there are like you, 'Mousie.' You dear little heap of prejudice, you are terribly one-sided, and there is none so blind as he who will not see. You have curtained the windows of your soul. Pull up the blinds and let the broad sunshine of reason in, and you will see all the dust and cobwebs of fanaticism gathering in every corner. Come out of your narrow little self into the broad flowery fields of philosophy, and soar with me into the lofty regions of science. . We will measure the stars; we will fathom the ocean; we will melt the granite rocks; we will disentomb the skeletons of the past; and we will penetrate the veil which clouds the future."

"You will tell me all things come by evolution; that man is but an atom of the universe, and must be reduced to atoms again; you will try to make science, one of God's unalterable laws, take the place of God Himself. I am

going forward to the spiritual growth of perfection, as taught by our Lord in His glorious humanity. You would take me back to the dark ages of the Stoics, whose cold philosophy and morality needed the quickening breath of the risen crucified Saviour and the Holy Spirit. Without that your religion is as different to Christianity as a marble statue to a living human form. 'I am come that ye should have life, and have it more abundantly.' 'And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.' 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.' O Mabel! why will you not accept of Jesus Christ; you are young and untried, but I tremble for you when you are brought into contact with temptation and trials. Self-reliance may stand by you in the smooth path, but it will forsake you at the Hill Difficulty, and despair will take its place at the open graves of your beloved ones."

"Dearest sister, I am content with my choice; why should you murmur. I am not disgracing you by transgressing any moral law; I am still helping you in all your little charitable schemes; I am as dutiful and obedient to my parents as you are yourself; as solicitous for the comfort of those round about me; and I am even self-denying enough to give up one intellectual feast on Sundays to listen to sleepy Mr. Paxton."



## CHAPTER II.

### *MR. AND MRS. HARRINGTON.*

DORA and Mabel Harrington were the only daughters of a retired Presbyterian clergyman, whose doctrine and general impulse was wider than his knowledge of mankind; whose character and motives were as pure and transparent as the clearest crystal streamlet; whose love was as unselfish as it was confiding. It was quite a common occurrence for Mr. Harrington to arrive home without his topcoat or umbrella, if he saw one whom he considered more needy than himself. It was, perhaps, as well for him that his wife's small fortune was entirely beyond his control, being invested in annuities on behalf of their two girls, and certain shares which yielded a moderate yearly income.

Mr. Harrington was a poet, a philosopher, and philanthropist, enthusiastic in all schemes for social advancement and reform, and he was an out and out red-hot republican.

At the time of which I am writing, the great American war against slavery was at its height, and few worked harder than Mr. Harrington to win sympathy on the side of the North. His meetings were crowded, and his converts won over by hundreds; the exciting discussions at the close, invariably ending in the defeat of some surly Southerners, would often cause Mr. Harrington to lose his self-control. In the excitement of his enthusiasm, leaping from the platform, he would seize a hat from the nearest head, waving it and shouting aloud, "Three cheers for President Lincoln."

Mr. Harrington was vacillating in his religious opinions—of no fixed principle—and when called upon by his church to explain certain statements which were not considered orthodox, he declined to bind himself down to a Confession of Faith which, he maintained, was not of God, but of man; and resigning his charge, he devoted his time to lecturing and writing.

He had been married twice. Dora was a baby when her mother died, and when their father brought home a successor, both his children were too young to rebel against a stepmother. The present Mrs. Harrington was a veritable Scotchwoman; method and order were her ruling principles. She was like a clock which, when it is wound up, fulfils its duty with measured exactness.

Mr. Harrington had been invited to occupy the pulpit of the old Abbey Church at D——, while the worthy professor and divine filled the Chair of Logic in the University at Edinburgh, temporarily vacant through illness, and then it was he met the woman destined to fill the place of mother to his daughters.

Martha Welsh was housekeeper for her bachelor brother, and though he and Mr. Harrington had been the closest of friends, it was with grim dissatisfaction the reverend professor learned he was to be robbed of his housekeeper by a man whom he now denounced as an English adventurer, a fortune-hunter, and apostate from the Church; even hinting that he might still have a wife living in some remote little village in the south. Miss Welsh, however, had every confidence in Mr. Harrington, and had evidently made up her mind that it would be better to be housekeeper for her husband than for her brother; besides, she explained, she felt called upon to make a little sacrifice for the sake of those two motherless children, not a romantic sentiment for the man; but here was a sphere of usefulness opened before her for which she had often yearned. So, after financial matters were settled to Mr. Welsh's satisfaction, they were married in the old Abbey Church manse.

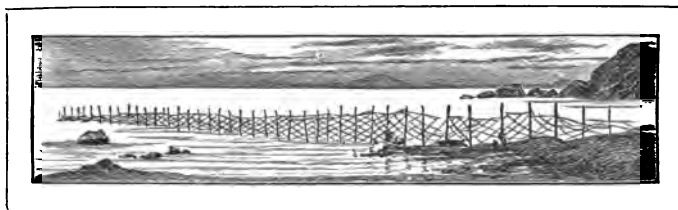
After the life of puritanical order, of strict observance of certain forms and ceremonies, which one is led to expect from the inmates of an old Scotch manse surrounded with plenty, if not luxury, and having a careful regard to appearance and respectability, and the opinion of the world in every little action, we can hardly blame Mrs. Harrington though she fretted and rebelled during the early years of her married life, which had suddenly ushered her into the midst of family cares, straightened circumstances, and a disregard, on her husband's part, to all outward appearance, and opinions which shocked the good lady's feelings continually. It needed all the love which she undoubtedly possessed for this Bohemian



clerical; love none the less that there were no scales of sentiment obscuring her eyes; love, the very depths and intensity of which caused her to see more plainly faults and failings, which were no doubt magnified through continual contrast with the life and conduct of the stern Scotch professor—her brother.

Mrs. Harrington was a religious woman. She knew the Shorter Catechism from beginning to end, and could repeat the whole of the 119th Psalm and most of the Paraphrases from memory. She was attentive to all Church ordinances, and attended divine service twice every Sabbath. Respectability generally goes arm in arm with religion, and all Mrs. Harrington's people were most respectable. Her father was an egg and butter merchant in a small country town on the Borders, and had been an elder for upwards of twenty years in the parish Church, by his scrupulous care in weighing his butter, handling his eggs, and doling out his charity, he had managed to save a respectable sum of money; give his family a respectable education; and lived to see his only son the respected occupant of the old Abbey Church.

Religion without love is like a flower without perfume, or a fruit tree bearing only leaves, it will neither nourish nor refresh. Church and family worship were as essential to Mrs. Harrington's existence as her daily food and bath, and she was shocked when easy going Mr. Harrington smilingly informed her family worship would be a new rule in his home, but added, "you can make your own laws, govern as you please, outside my study, and call me when I am required."



### CHAPTER III.

#### *MABEL.*

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”—*Col. ii. 8.*

WE cannot be surprised that this grew to be a divided household. Dora was only five years old when her stepmother assumed authority, and being of a very delicate constitution, accepted readily the care and attention she had missed awhile, and between her and her new mother there grew an attachment deep and tender, strengthening as years increased.

Mabel was four years older than her sister, and as robust in her mental as in her physical constitution. She was her father's daily companion in his walks, and in his study she ministered to all his wants. Her first responsible charge was his ink and pens, and later, his books and MSS.

She guarded his study with jealous tenderness; no hands but hers dare sweep or dust there, and her

father's chair was a throne of soft cushions, which she was ever re-arranging for his comfort and ease. She would read to him for hours, without growing weary, the driest books of philosophy, physics, morality, politics, etc.

Mr. Harrington was much liked; he was a splendid orator, a courteous gentleman, and a cheerful and vivacious companion and talker. His home became the centre of a crowd of professors and divines of every shade of opinion. Here they would discuss without reserve, giving vent at times to such broad views as would have shocked the world outside. Thus, indiscriminately, was Mabel allowed to read, and listen to conversations before her judgment was matured; and contrasting the broad freedom of thought of these eloquent men with the cold, lifeless teaching and preaching in her stepmother's church, she came to the conclusion that to be orthodox was to be narrow, cold and weak, and decided to choose the flowery paths of philosophy and morality, rather than the narrow, rugged paths of Christianity.

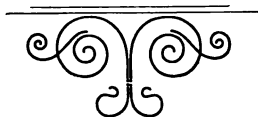
Alas, the Church is too often a drag to the enthusiasm of the young, who require to be propelled with Divine love and sympathy, as shown in the life of Jesus when looked into with the eye of faith, undimmed by the spectacles of creed or catechism. Teach them His yoke is easy and His burden light; tell them not only of the blood of the cross, but of the *love* pointing to a tender, compassionate Saviour; the glorious termination of the manhood of Christ, a Divine lesson *lived out*—not merely written or spoken for our benefit—encouraging us with a practical evidence of human possibility; not telling us “No man is able in this life to keep the commandments of

God," but stretching forth the tender pierced hands which have been spent in doing God's work, have healed the sick, raised the fallen, blessed the penitent, and from that majestic cross beckoning us forward with assurance of help and attainment. "Be ye also perfect." "Lo, I am with you always." "Ask and ye shall receive."

I have undertaken, and that briefly, to give a sketch of Mabel's inner life and experience, and can only touch lightly on her material surroundings, inasmuch as they were the means of help to her spiritual development.

Did you ever observe how much our temporal circumstances and human relationships are utilized and made subservient to the Supreme will, to work out Divine intent. We need no other key to the Bible than this close study with prayer of our own lives. How utterly independent of us God's purposes and plans unfold themselves! We sometimes try with our little finite wisdom to rebel when our very objections and would-be obstacles are used to assist His unalterable designs. Yes, "Ye must be born again," "Become as a little child," a child in trust, a child in warm glowing enthusiasm, a child in thirst for knowledge. Sitting at the feet of our Father in Heaven, learning of Him all it is good for us to know; what He speaks at times in parables He will unfold in our lives if we will but wait and trust. Let us look up into His face, at all times taking Him with us our inseparable Christ. The Christ of the church and of the home, of the workroom and the street. Christ the Head of all things, in His perfect humanity our example, in His divine atonement our consolation and hope, in His majesty and wisdom our humility, our reverence and love.

I believe in the Bible, no other book has ever revealed my own heart so truly to myself as the Bible, showing at once the evil and a remedy. And I prostrate myself in humble adoration and awe before Almighty God, the Maker of heaven and earth, King, Father, Saviour, who has done so much, reached so high, and stooped so low, who has left nothing for me to do but rejoice in His completeness, and sing His glorious praise.





#### CHAPTER IV.

### *MR. HARRINGTON'S SCHEME TO REACH THE MASSES.*

"Without Me ye can do nothing."—*Jesus.*

MRS. Harrington did not like London, neither the people nor the houses were solid enough for her idea, and as Mr. Harrington's happiness depended solely on the contentment and enjoyment of others, he was easily persuaded to make Edinburgh his centre. Having disentangled himself from all denominational churches, and after spending so many years almost entirely in his study, a sudden impulse seized him. All his old energy and activity suddenly awoke again, and evolved themselves into a pet scheme. His great heart was moved to pity as he saw the aimless crowds pervading the streets on Sabbath evenings, to whom the very name of church was distasteful. And why? because the church is too exclusive, wrapping a cloak of reserve about itself, thwarting the object of its own

existence, failing to reclaim the mass because it values *class*. "If there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, 'Sit thou here in a good place;' and say to the poor man, 'Stand thou there,' are ye not partial in yourselves?" (Jas. ii. 2-4).

Every church member should be an evangelist, if they do not speak the Gospel they should live it, there should be no class distinction inside our churches, whatever the world of trade and commerce outside may demand. For here is spread the table of the Lord, here we meet for spiritual food. "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." If I had my way, rich attire and fashionable clothing would be put aside entirely on the Sabbath, and only used for recreation days.

There are hundreds of good men and women thirsting for the privilege we enjoy of hearing the Word of God expounded to them, and of mingling at communion, who remain at home or walk the streets on Sunday because they cannot attempt to compete with the dress of the fashionable Christians. It is the duty of every man and woman who has professed the name of Jesus Christ, to ask what can I do to lesson this evil, "Lord, what *wouldst Thou have me* to do." We have enlisted ourselves in Thy army, we have consecrated our lives to Thee, we are willing to spend and be spent by Thee, speak, for Thy servants hear Thee. "Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only." How plain, how stern is His command. The very poorest of us can do something. "A cup of cold water in His name." "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these

My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." What are our churches for? Look at the empty pews—if the invited guests come not, go out into the streets and slums and bid them to the feast, there is room for all.

We look with sorrow and alarm upon the fearful amount of poverty, sickness, and vice in our cities, and in our panic-stricken ignorance we cry aloud, "Down with the publican!" We fold our hands and lift our eyes, and pray in righteous horror and indignation, and thank God that *we* have accepted salvation. Sisters and brothers in Christ, it is to you I am writing this book; on *us* depends the victory. We as Church members have a responsibility resting upon us—a duty to perform. We who meet at the table of the Lord in fellowship as one body, must go forth from it as individual members, according to our capacity and power, and face the foe man to man; overthrow the devil in each heart; and carry the glorious invitation from Christ, "Come unto me all ye that are athirst, and drink of the water of life freely." Awaken self-respect, self-control, and prove Christian equality. Instruct them with the clear, emphatic, *lived-out* example of Christ, His downright out and out active teaching—the "love your neighbour as yourself" religion; the "all men are equal in the sight of God" creed; the "God is love" gospel; and the "seventy times seven forgiveness" of Christ. Speak it, show it, live it, in their presence, till the warmth of God's love through us reaches their dead souls, and quickens them to newness of life—until they are born again—and with that new birth comes the putting off the old man and putting on the new. Then will be realised the prophesy, "the merchants of the earth" (publicans) "shall weep and



mourn over her, for no man buyeth their merchandise any more" (Rev. xviii. 11).

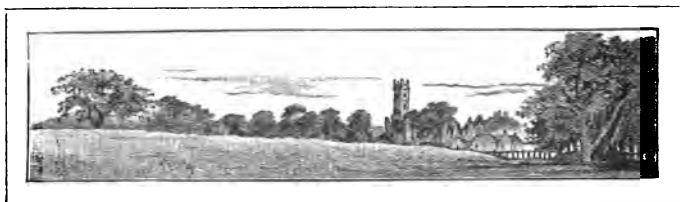
"Down with the publicans!" 'Tis a warning blast from the trumpets of the faithful army. The walls of the great city of Babylon begin to shake, but her time of overthrow is not yet come. The publican is the result, and not the cause of this nineteenth century evil, if we wish to destroy it, we must strike at the root of the tree. It is useless to lop off its branches.

We thank God that His judgments are being made manifest. We hear the gospel bells ringing on every side, and rejoice in the extension of His kingdom. See the glorious army of preachers and teachers, of philanthropists, nurses, missionaries, and evangelists. Do not say we are degenerating. Never was charity so broad and far-reaching; never was the name of Christ a greater power. We seem to hear His chariot wheels and the joyful shout—"Behold I come quickly." "For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will" (Rev. xvii. 17). "Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy Name? For *Thou* only *art* holy; for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest" (Rev. xv. 4).

Mr. Harrington in his observations had grasped, to a certain extent, the cause of the evil, the apathy and aversion of the masses to anything approaching church, and he was convinced he could create a grand reform; but his remedy was human, he left out the Divine. He would win them by appealing to their sensual feelings. He engaged the charming Operetta House, brilliantly lit, and gay with exotic plants, all the seats were free, no objectionable plates at the door, nor collections inside. He engaged

musical talent, sometimes this programme was more secular than sacred. Every person, on entering, was presented with a leaflet, which they were invited to keep, containing the hymns to be sung at that service, and a number of choice quotations from popular authors. The services were warm, bright, instructive, and non-sectarian. He chose popular topics, health, politics, education, literature, religion. He now and then introduced a thin red line of salvation, which could be obliterated or toned down according to the temper of his audience. Of course the meetings were crowded, but this negative preaching could have but one termination, absolute failure. He was loudly condemned by the faithful ministers and servants of Jesus Christ, who love to see their banner unfurled in the glorious sunshine of truth. He was denied in public, but courted in private, by a sneaking few, who preach to the fashionable worldlings and merchants of Babylon, and are handsomely paid to twist the Word of God into such a shape as will fit easily the conscience of the people, and not interfere with their unprincipled trading; and heartily supported and encouraged by a few Unitarians and Socialists who loved to hear themselves talk.

At the close of a year's hard labour, with whitened hair and lightened purse, widened experience and narrowed philosophy, sadly he balanced the profit and loss. He had won over a large number of church members to a state of *indecision*, and there was a marked increase of egotism, self-reliance, scepticism. He had gained immense popularity, the wide-mouthed applause of the masses, and he had almost entirely lost Jesus Christ.



## CHAPTER V.

### *MR. HARRINGTON'S CONVERSION.*

"Ye must be born again."

NO wonder Mr. Harrington's physicians ordered him to quit at once the scene of his labour and defeat; and Mrs. Harrington insisted on accompanying him to the South of France. Mabel and Dora, she affirmed, would be quite safe in the charge of their faithful old housekeeper, and they could be trusted to obedience.

Mr. Harrington purposed, after recruiting in the South of France for a few weeks, to visit Rome, and from thence take his long wished for tour through Palestine—a trip anticipated with boyish excitement.

But it was many weeks before Mr. Harrington left France. There he lay, crushed, bruised, defeated, almost dead. This was the man who for years had occupied a Christian pulpit, professing to preach eternal life, now himself groping in darkness in the awful stillness of that sick chamber, on the brink of the grave, crying aloud, "Lord, save me or I perish."

He had tried so long to please the *cultured ears* and

*refined feelings* of his congregations by throwing a mantle over the blood and cross of a crucified Saviour, that he had himself lost sight of the Bible truth, "Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John vi. 54). And now he heard the tender compassionate Lord speaking unto him, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." "What wouldst thou that I should do unto thee?"

As long as material earth and flesh imprison our spiritual parts, there will always be doubting Thomases and wavering Peters; but Mr. Harrington never doubted that he had been brought face to face in that sick chamber with the Lord Jesus Christ.

None could have convinced him that it was other than His voice which spake: "I am the resurrection and the life." "No man cometh to the Father but by Me." "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." "*Repent, believe, and be baptized.*" These were the conditions of pardon and salvation held out to him; and the crushed, bruised soul drew near to the cross and grasped the tender pierced hand held down to save, crying aloud, "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." When Mr. Harrington left that chamber he was a new man in Christ Jesus, he did not die, he had "been born again."



## CHAPTER VI.

### *MABEL BECOMES REBELLIOUS.*

FOR many weeks after her father left Edinburgh, Mabel was inconsolable. Her occupation was gone. She could not bear to read aloud, she missed her sympathetic audience. She found no pleasure in her morning walks without his arm to lean upon. She soon grew weary of her needlework—hitherto triumphs of art accomplished by her nimble fingers while a silent hearer of some exciting controversy. She would shut herself in her father's study, and burying her face in the cushions of his chair, give way to paroxysms of grief, which were usually followed by sullen silence and discontent, with occasional outbursts of irritability, which were most distressing to her gentle sister, Dora, who was generally most accessible during these ill moods.

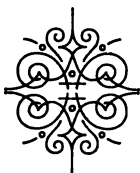
To sweet tempered Dora it was inconceivable how any but an undisciplined child could allow her personal grievances to create discord in the harmony of another's life. Hitherto Mabel had suffered no direct opposition to her will, and like many more, had earned a reputation for

excellence of temper, which had never been tried. There is no merit in amiability when our surroundings are conducive to happiness. But, oh! there are lives of heroism lived daily in our midst, marvels of endurance, of wonderful patience and self-renunciation, unrecorded by the many tongued press, and unrewarded by flimsy royal favour. To possess these transient honours, man must tread on bruised and bleeding hearts of fellow men, and wade through seas of human tears; but God's recording angel will mark Christ's redeemed before His throne, proclaiming, "These are they who have come out of much tribulation."

When Dora found gentle remonstrance with her sister, during these fretful moods, was of no avail, she quietly assumed authority with a dignity and firmness worthy of maturer years. But, though Mabel accepted her sister's government, it was more out of apathy and indifference than from an awakened sense of duty. Her rebellious nature was not conquered, only dormant, during existing circumstances. She attended the Established Church, where her step-mother and sister were members, twice every Sunday, and even went to the Evangelistic prayer meetings which were being held in a hall during the week, and in which her sister took a great interest. There might have been no interruption to the harmony—and Dora was growing quite sanguine as to her sister finally joining the Church with herself—when the tempter's opportunity came again in the form of a visit from Mr. Rathbone, a gentleman held in much esteem by their father, and who had been an enthusiastic supporter of his Church scheme. Their father had entrusted Mr. Rathbone with the winding up of sundry

little financial matters, and after committing various receipts and statements to the sisters keeping, he had not much difficulty in persuading them to allow him to drive them home with him to make the acquaintance of his young wife, Vera, who had the reputation of being witty and fascinating in conversation, a piquant little actress, and was—though here opinion was divided—counted a great beauty.

Woman's curiosity prevailed—as it often does—even over propriety; and they were soon seated by Mr. Rathbone, in his phaeton, on their way to his charming suburban residence, “Eden Hermitage.”





## CHAPTER VII.

### *Mr. RATHBONE.*

MR. Harrington had a high opinion of Mr. Rathbone, deferring to his judgment in most weighty matters. He was known in their home by the soubriquet of "Little Giant," being most diminutive in form, but of mighty reasoning power. To occasional acquaintances he was somewhat cynical; he was loved most by those who knew him best. His profession as analytical and manufacturing chemist would often call forth his interference in city sanitary arrangements, which was not always acceptable to those in authority. Most reformers are looked upon with suspicion at first, and every new project of his won for him the sneers and caricatures of the press, which he had the wisdom to treat with dignified silence, content to wait for the more acceptable applause which was sure to follow the success of any of his tried schemes.

In religion, Mr. Rathbone was an advanced Unitarian; a man almost perfect in his moral principles. He believed entirely in self-government. To him Jesus was a



model of what every man should be, and, he affirmed, many had in the past and were now daily attaining to His perfection. He would no more worship Christ as the Divine Lord than he would pray to the Virgin Mary, which, in His opinion, was a not greater error: often exclaiming in his indignation, "One half of the world worships a *Man*, and the other half worship His mother."

O Jesus, thou Rock of Salvation, against which so many human barques have split, foundering round about in the black sea of doubt; tossed hither and thither "by every wind and wave of doctrine"—looking down into the humanity of Christ, but refusing to look up to the light of Divinity, which would throw a halo of guidance across the dark waters. O weak, stubborn mortal; O presumptuous fool, take back thy miserable little barque from the mighty Rock. Think not to fathom the depths or measure the strength, or to peer through the mystery of that Divine humanity with thy weak mortal vision. Insult not the Almighty wisdom which has claimed thy amazed wonder in tiny things of His creation. Better go back to the broad ocean of unbelief than be dashed to atoms against the Rock of Salvation.

One visit to Eden Hermitage satisfied Dora. She felt no pleasure in the fashionable chit-chat of the giddy Vera, there was a want of sincerity in her. She was ever causing amusement at the expense of others by her clever mimicry, and Dora felt she would be the next subject for her fit of *beaux esprit*.

With Mabel it was quite different. In the seclusion of her father's study, her intercourse with her fellow creatures was confined to students of book lore, and her knowledge

of human nature was necessarily meagre. She was always ready to accept of one on their own recommendation. From her experience of the world, she could not detect any motive to dissemble. Mabel grew fond of Vera's never-ending vivacity; she was just ripe for it, and drank in the excitement of this new life with the hungry eagerness of the morbid invalid who swallows intoxicants regardless of the after consequence. She gradually spent more and more of her time with the Rathbones, till Vera and Mabel were almost inseparable companions.

Dora tried every remonstrance in her power. The dialogue with which my story opens was only one of many such conversations with the same unsatisfactory termination. Dora would have written to her father, urging him to use his authority, but knowing his esteem for Mr. Rathbone, she sadly concluded it would be useless, as her interference would be condemned as prejudice and bigotry; her father would see no harm in Mabel's frequent visits to Eden Hermitage.

Dora was ignorant of the spiritual change through which Mr. Harrington had passed, or she would not have hesitated, and her father was still too weak in body to write at great length. He was drinking in the bliss of his new birth; he was supremely happy, and wished for no companionship but his ever present Saviour. With Him he lived in continual communion; he was enjoying to the full, for the first time, "that peace which the world cannot give, and which the world cannot take away."



## CHAPTER VIII.

### *VERA.*

EDEN Hermitage, from its exterior, was not what its name would warrant one to suppose. Enclosed by high walls, thickly topped with ivy, and guarded on the inner side by a row of stately elms which stood like sentinels, and from whose branches issued a weird and seldom ceasing sound of cawing. It was a city of rooks at present. Mr. Rathbone delighted in their harsh discordant chatter, and found special pleasure in watching them darkening his trees with their nests, ready for nature to throw her lovely green protecting mantle round them.

Beyond this part of their home, his wife was allowed to reign and exercise her own bright fancy. Vera would like to have made rook pies for dinner every day till there was no vestige left of these "ominous looking birds." But Mr. Rathbone was firm, and led his wife to understand that, though she had won his heart, he did not intend to surrender

his will. He hated petticoat government outside domestic matters. He would have his crows in the garden, while she could have her pets and fancies in the house.

Perhaps this is why Mrs. Rathbone carried to exaggeration her desire for colour, light, and beauty, even to the choosing of her servants. Everything round about her must be comely; she could not bear an ugly face to stand behind her husband's chair at table, it spoiled her digestion, and her maids, in consequence, were noted for their pretty faces and smart manners. A friend once laughingly railed her and questioned her propriety as to the future effect upon Mr. Rathbone, when she haughtily retorted, "Sir, my husband gave evidence of his judgment when he married me; were I to be jealous, I should insult his wisdom and acknowledge myself inferior to another woman. I have not yet met my superior among my own sex."

But gay dress, an elegantly furnished house, and pretty, good-tempered servants do not make the sum total of happiness. Vera Rathbone was a frequent prey to ennui, although few of her acquaintances could have believed it, and when one of these dreary fits seized her, she always blamed the crows.

March was ended, it had sustained its reputation, gone out like a lamb, and April burst in with gladness, flooding the dry earth with sunshine, kissing the shrubs and trees with her warm, quickening breath, and bathing them with her refreshing dews, till parched and withered boughs grew pregnant with the beauty and the fulness of the spring.

None welcomed this glad change with greater joy than did Mrs. Rathbone. She was tired of velvets and furs, of closed carriages and "stuffy" rooms. Her winter drawing-

room, a few months ago, in her estimation a perfect triumph of art, was now hateful with its heavy crimson hangings and warm velvet cushions and rich skins. To-day she had opened, for the first time, her summer drawing-room, designed entirely by herself, the exquisite green carpet was like a rich green lawn thickly dotted over with yellow primroses. The chairs and couches were upholstered in satin to match, prettily decked with primrose ribbons, daylight peeped in through lilac silk curtains, subdued with soft creamy lace, and lopped with bunches of red daisies. The lamps and chandeliers held globes like buttercups, with daisy shades hung over them, suspended by gold laburnum chains, and in perfect harmony with all this spring loveliness was Vera, in a soft clinging robe of charming hue to match the purple hyacinthe, flitting gracefully hither and thither, placing here a ribbon, there a flower, here a fold of lace, or there a wave of silk, arranging and re-arranging, to her own fantastic taste, the myriad little toys and nic-nacs which constitute the entire charm of a lady's drawing-room.

So much engaged was Mrs. Rathbone over the position of a group of flower girls in Dresden china, that her husband entered quite unseen, and noiselessly stealing up behind his pretty wife, gently blindfolded her with his hands, and waited silently till she should give the name of the intruder. "It is Percy, I guessed rightly, yet you claim a forfeit," she laughingly exclaimed, as he drew back her head and kissed her dimpled mouth. "I fear you'll have to pay a hundred forfeits such as this if you grow thus in loveliness. My darling, there are guests below who wait your presence. Miss Harrington acted as guide

to a clerical friend who comes with news and introduction from her father. Let your request unite with mine, that he will share our hospitality for my dear old friend's sake, this is his first visit to Scotland."

"Is he old or young? A clerical, you say, Unitarian or Trinitarian? Has he come to some charge here? Is he married?"

"My love, you forget I am only a man, I cannot discover so much knowledge while shaking hands with a stranger. Come down to the library, you will be satisfied, for who could resist being catechised by Vera?"

"I hope he's not a sanctimonious Methodist, they are always migrating from place to place, and if he is, 'farewell content,' farewell to dance and song, and theatre, poor Vera's 'occupation's gone.'"

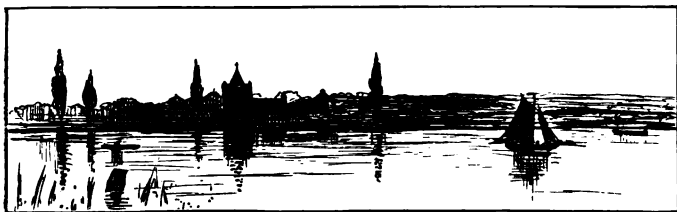
"But Vera has the advantage of the unfortunate Moor of Venice, she may return to her frivolities again."

"Perhaps not," said Mrs. Rathbone, with a comical little pucker on her pretty mouth, "perhaps he will convert me. I have heard they are valued according to the number of souls they rescue, and he is sure to try and save me, for I must put on a long face to make him feel at home, and I may now and then give a groan of self-sympathy with my patient endurance, while he talks, and he will be sure to conclude that he has scored a victory."

Mr. Rathbone might have told his wife more, but he knew so well her wonderful talent for fathoming men and circumstances, she would not be long in his company ere she had discovered what he had been, what he was, and what he intended to be.

A joyful sound of laughter surprised them as they

ascended the stairs. Mabel's sweet soprano and a rich tenor voice making a melody which thrilled through Vera's heart, causing her to look into her husband's face with enquiring wonder. Mr. Rentoull had been giving Mabel a graphic description of his journey up Mount Vesuvius with her father and mother, during their visit to Rome, and he imitated Mrs. Harrington's look of terror, combined with resignation, when she saw the perpendicular line they were about to ascend and descend in a car, so perfectly, that Mabel laughed uncontrollably, and he joined in as heartily, as he recalled the scene. Vera heard enough as they entered the room to appreciate the circumstance, and, bowing gracefully to Mr. Rentoull, she ran past him, and flinging herself on a low seat at Mabel's feet, added her own merry peal of laughter to theirs, saying, when she could make her voice be heard, "Pray finish your story, Mr. Rentoull, I love character sketches," and there was no other introduction needed.



## CHAPTER IX.

### *ERNEST RENTOULL.*

ERNEST RENTOULL was the only son of doting parents who possessed enough of this world's wealth, and usual lack of wisdom, to place the physical and moral health of their boy in jeopardy.

Mr. Rentoull, Senior, was a barrister, not over scrupulous, therefore immensely popular, his clients being chiefly of that class who depend more upon the ingenuity and eloquence of the pleader, than upon any virtuous merit or honest claim their case can show.

Mr. Rentoull had not so much respect for his profession as to desire his son to perpetuate in it his name. Perhaps he felt the nature of his own position too much, and chose an extreme. He would give his son a clerical training. He would put him through the University, he might come out a Bishop or a Dean, he had already displayed evidence of oratorical ability, he should not fail for lack of education.

So Ernest passed through the University, and came forth not only with degrees of merit, but sanctified and purified from the dross of selfishness and worldly ambition. Dear



to his father's heart were the bright gold medals embedded in their silk-lined cases, his handsome Encyclopedia and Theological treatise—but far more precious to himself was the germ of truth divinely planted in his heart, burning and throbbing to be proclaimed by his tongue, that Jesus was the Son of God.

He had passed through it all, and conquered those besetting sins of youth which lurk to waylay all in their path through life, and help to make or mar the character.

He had faced them all, the desire for pleasure and self-indulgence, the pompous egotism of youth, with all its self-reliance and assumption of manhood, the valley of humiliation, doubt, despair, and the return to childhood with its wonderful discovery that you have only got wisdom when you have learnt to own how little you know.

Yes, he had passed through it all, that sceptical doubt, dwarfing the Christian manhood, in its garb of modern thought. He had heard his fellow-students denouncing the atonement, disputing miracles, denying the divinity of Christ and the inspiration of the Bible; going out from the University, and accepting a call to teach and preach Christ crucified; subscribing their names to what they had denounced as a lie, in consideration of a handsome stipend and a position in the Church. Can we wonder that religion is suffering through such men?

And now one determination shaped the conduct of his life, to find the truth, and when found, to preach it according to his conviction, be it Unitarian or Trinitarian; not as a profitable speculation, but from a pure love of the truth itself.

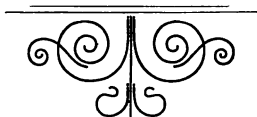
Ernest had never once doubted the existence of God,

his heart had gone out to Him and accepted Him as his Father—essential to his own being. As God breathed into Adam the breath of life, and he became a living soul, so, through impartation, Ernest claimed to be a son of God. He enjoyed Him in his works; communed with Him in spirit; and accepted and bowed to His discipline. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." With a prayer in his heart and the Bible before him, no wonder Ernest Rentoull found the truth in its most satisfying form.

But Ernest was not content with his own decision. He studied carefully all that was opposed to him in doctrine, and courted disputes, that he might be made familiar with arguments, and so be prepared to face his assailants at all points. One fact made itself plainly felt, that though he might fulfil his father's wish and become a preacher, he could never subscribe to the tenets of the State Church. Nonconformity, he knew, was held as degrading, by his parents and the majority of his fellow-students, but he had desired to "prove all things," and that same desire would make him "hold fast that which is good."

He remained firm throughout, and notwithstanding his mother's pathetic appeal, and his father's sterner authority, commanding obedience with threat of disinheritance, Ernest quietly replied, "It grieves me much to oppose your wishes, still more your command, for I desire in all things to be a dutiful son, but when it comes to a choice between obedience to you and obedience to God, as spoken through my conscience, I cannot hesitate. 'He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.' To fulfil my ideal of a disciple or minister of

Christ, I 'must disentangle myself from all dogmatic creeds and humanly devised church ordinances which, through time, temperament, and fashions of modern society, have evolved themselves into the Church. With Christ to build upon, the spirit of truth to live by, and God to crown all, I will go forth to labour, 'not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life.' Jesus is that bread of life."





## CHAPTER X.

### *THE YOUNG GRADUATE MAKES A START.*

WHEN Mr. Rentoull, Senior, found his son was firm, and determined to adhere to his resolution, he very wisely decided not to frustrate him in the meantime, only stipulating that for two years, at least, he should be careful not to identify himself with any dissenting church.

Ernest readily agreed. He had finished his curriculum at college, but was in no hurry to be ordained for the Church, as he wished to gather higher honours. He would lay all the wealth and all the culture which education could give him at the feet of the Saviour he loved, saying, "Use me, Lord, and use these, through me, for Thy honour and glory. The proud aristocrat should not be able to say it is only the illiterate who preach salvation through a crucified Redeemer."

Eager to begin, Ernest engaged a hall in one of the most aristocratic neighbourhoods, and advertised a course

of lectures *for the rich*. The following twelve subjects were announced:—

Why Do People Go to Church?  
Fashionable Religion.  
How to Know the Truth.  
Whence Came the Christ of the Modern Church?  
Who was Jesus of Nazareth?  
Spiritual Spectacles.  
What is Sin?  
Home Responsibilities.  
How to Dispel *Ennui*.  
Am I in Debt?  
Who is Your Banker?  
Profit and Loss.

He could not have done anything that would have proved more satisfactory to his father, who did not seem to fathom his son's motive. He desired to see Ernest in the foremost rank of society, and that he might become famous. "Now I am satisfied, there is a chance of your becoming great," said his father. "I was afraid that, like most of those Calvinistic men, you were going to pitch your tent amid the slums and alleys, and lose your magnificent talents and education in giving teetotal lectures and free breakfasts, or preaching at street corners, while a man held a Gospel lamp and shouted 'Hallelujah' as the passer-by threw down a penny."

"Alas, my dear father," said Ernest, "my observations have convinced me there is more need for the preaching of the Gospel among the so-called 'better class' than among the heroic poor, who often live the lives of Christian martyrs. The rich have lost the pearl of truth in their gold bags, and I would like to help them rake it out again."

“Well, well, my boy, I am proud of you,” said his father; “you will win a great name if you are just prudent. Don’t be too outspoken, you know; none of us like our little weaknesses made too prominent; and a little bit of flattery dropped in among the Gospel, now and then, will do no harm, they will like you all the better. You are young, my boy, and youth is always a bit sentimental, you know. Your sentiment has evidently taken the form of religion; but I have every faith in the future, and can afford to wait. You are a genius in bud, but you will expand to the full flower by-and-bye, and we shall enjoy the refreshing fragrance of what at present are but unshapely leaves. I predict a grand future for you, Ernest, and you will gain honour, fame, and glory. Wait till then. What is the use of being so awfully good in this practical age—try to be great!”

“What to be good, my father, if not great?  
Goodness is greatness of most God-like mould.  
The world wants heart, not head, to dissipate  
The misery angels do with tears behold—  
A touch of heaven to turn earth’s dross to gold;  
Mind’s noblest mission is to make man feel.  
The heart’s a grave—back let the stone be rolled,  
Nor more its deathless treasures all conceal,  
But intellect and love one Majesty reveal.”

Ernest did not seek popularity, he was only ambitious to be a labourer. He would plough and dig and plant for the Lord of the harvest. But he *did* become very popular, and, of course, there was the usual amount of prejudice to fight against; the rancour of the press; the enquiries of the curious; the sifting and searching for motives; the censure of the proud; and the condemnation of convicted

guilt. But outweighing all these was the applause of conscience, and the evidence of coming fruit. It was only the coarse green blade, but the blossom was within.

Ernest was neither depressing as a companion nor uncomely to behold, and was buoyant in spirit. His laugh was always of the merriest and heartiest. He had a splendid physique, and his powerful voice testified to the strength of his lungs. His hair was a rich dark auburn, and his clear, full eyes—one could scarcely decide their colour, whether blue or black—changing with every light without and thought within, while his forehead was unusually broad and high, and but for the rich clusters of hair falling in waves over it, one might have condemned it as out of proportion to his girlish mouth and chin, which as yet had resisted all attempts at cultivation. He had a heart brimming over with sympathy, and he was the very embodiment of joyfulness, for he said: “I hold the antidote to all human suffering—I come to preach ‘*glad tidings*.’”



## CHAPTER XI.

### *ERNEST MATRICULATES IN THE SCHOOL OF EXPERIENCE.*

ERNEST had everything in his favour. He did not lack money, therefore the rich need not fear their bank books were in danger. He did not lack ability or culture, therefore none could say the simplicity of his Gospel was due to ignorance. He did not lack beauty, courtesy, or accomplishments, therefore the young need not fear the growth of morbid inclinations through associating with him.

But the popularity and eloquence of the clever young graduate did not deter the migration of the populace from the smoky atmosphere of London, which reached even their lovely suburban residences.

It was when the fox and the hare were being beaten from their purple covert on the moor, and the wild hart



chased panting to the glen; when the fish leaped gaily to the surface of the water as the angler dreamed idly on the banks of the beautiful Tweed; when the College gates were closed to allow teachers and scholars to resuscitate exhausted energy,—it was then Ernest became restless with a desire to widen his knowledge of mankind.

God's school of wisdom is always open, His faithful teacher, Experience, is ever at her post scaring pale Reason with the ugly object lessons which she and Truth, the bold interpreter, brings forth, winning to higher standards more than Reason's eloquence has ever gained.

Ernest packed his valise and set sail for Italy. He did not want company there, he wished to be a silent observer, and drink in the beauties of nature as a stimulant to fresh effort in proclaiming God's love, which thrilled his whole being, bubbling over in his heart, and gushing forth into eloquent words.

It was while he was in Rome he met Mr. Harrington, and cemented a lasting friendship, based on their mutual spiritual experience. Mr. Harrington talked much of his daughters, and especially of Mabel, owning he suffered much remorse of conscience in having failed to tell her of Christ's redeeming love, and his daily prayer was that God would reveal Himself to her as He had done to him, and now it seemed to him his prayer would be speedily answered.

Ernest promised to visit Edinburgh for the special purpose of telling Mabel and Dora the joyful news their father had confided to him. He was longer in doing so than he anticipated. He did not remain in Italy, but, unknown to his father, returned to London, and there became

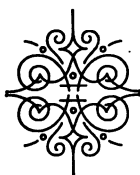
one of the working men. He tried the effect of arriving in the big city with very little money, and living on his own earnings. His hardships and adventures would fill many a page had I time to write them. He was a clerk in a large work for a week. He was a porter in a clothing warehouse. He was an omnibus conductor. He was one of the unemployed applying to the charity organizations of the city, and obtained a day's work to break stones near one of the parks, for which he received a shilling, a basin of soup, and a slice of bread—they called it a dinner. He afterwards became a pot boy in a "manufactory of drunkards" den, near the docks, and terminated a brief career there by being marched to jail between two policemen, charged with disorderly conduct. He had interfered with his employers in their rough ejection of one of their victims, a young sailor, whom they were roughly tossing to the street, after they had extracted all his money, and made him too helpless for self-defence. Ernest made no attempt to defend himself, and was fined a guinea or four days. He refused to pay the fine, as he wanted to get to the "inner circle." When he was released he was invited to join a gang of housebreakers, with the tempting offer of easy work, fine clothes, and lots of "chink," if he would only give them the "tips;" but Ernest considered his education was finished. He returned to his plain apartment, and locking himself in his room, he gave vent to his overtaxed feelings, crying like a heart-broken child. He thought of the dear Saviour who had walked the earth, and shared man's sufferings, and died because of man's sinfulness. O what *He* must have suffered through the selfishness and grossness of humanity!

Ernest felt rejoiced that he had been daily crucified with Him, and henceforth he would continue to joy in tribulation which made him more like Christ.

That winter he spent among the class he had been associating with, though he was not recognised owing to his clerical garb and occupation, for he ministered to their temporal and spiritual wants, and did an immense amount of good.

After spending a few weeks with his father, Ernest resumed his course of preaching in their own neighbourhood, receiving quite an ovation.

At the end of March he set out on foot to Edinburgh, working, sometimes begging, on the road, generally preaching on the Sabbath as he passed through the villages and towns. When he arrived in Edinburgh, he found his portmanteau with all his requirements waiting, as he had requested, at the Cockburn Hotel, and after a good night's rest and refreshment, he went in search of the Misses Harrington.





## CHAPTER XII.

### *ON ARTHUR'S SEAT.*

ERNEST did not allow himself to be persuaded into accepting the hospitality of the Rathbones during his short stay in Edinburgh. He felt he would rather have freedom as to his own engagements. Their home was seldom free of guests, and he wished to spend most of his time with the daughters of Mr. Harrington. In his letter, their father had commanded them to act as guides to Mr. Rentoull, accompanying him to the various places of interest in and around this beautiful city. Dora was very frequently engaged in her philanthropic duties, thus affording Ernest a very acceptable opportunity of conversing with Mabel on the subject nearest his own heart.

One beautiful evening, after climbing to the summit of Arthur's Seat, they sat down, exhausted by the steep ascent, and were entranced with the glorious beauty which surrounded them. Low down in the east, a mass of inky black clouds had gathered, out of which was rising a lovely

crescent moon. Preceding her, was one bright star beckoning her forward in the track of the now setting sun, who had left his evidence behind, thrilling the heart of every living creature. The soft sighing of the wind and the distant moan of the city mingled in a sad, sweet music resembling the strains of an Æolian harp.

"Yonder sky," said Mabel, "reminds me of the Franco-German war: poor defeated France rising out from the conflict, beckoned by the star of peace and hope, while to the west, Germany, flushed with gory triumph, is retiring from the crimson battlefield to rest in his own glory."

"To me," said Ernest, "it is like a new-born Christian soul rising from the gulf of selfishness and sin, led by God's angel — conscience; a half-formed, timid soul, growing in strength and brightness as the darkness round about it deepens."

"You make a *sermon* out of everything, Mr. Rentoull. To me, also, nature is full of allegory, but not of the preacher's sort—I love poetry."

"Might not the preacher be a poet too, Miss Harrington? How often the poet's preaching is the most successful."

"Yes, for their teaching dignifies us to the rank of sentient beings. We feel the power of mind which overrules dead matter, and we glory in the sovereignty of man."

"He who created matter also rules over mind. God is mind. Mind is the soul of man, an impartation from the Creator, making us one with God: To Him be the praise and the glory."

"And do we not give Him the glory when we make the most of the talents we possess; when we enjoy His works and use His bounties? If you give me a drink of water

from yonder stream, do I not show my gratitude and pleasure by drinking it?"

"Yes, Miss Harrington, but that would not satisfy the giver. Were I to leave this pleasant seat and ascend these ugly crags to supply your need, you would thank me in a sweeter way with eye and tongue and heart. Even the sheep show gratitude by eating. A mother rejoices in her newly born child, and feels a thrill of pleasure as it draws its food from her own heart, but her joy is never perfect till the soul peeps through the eyes, waking to recognition, and finding in her its source and fount of life, owning its weakness, confidence, and love in that first thrilling utterance, 'Mother.'"

"He only lives whom Jesus loves,  
And forward in God's wisdom moves  
To His great purpose, Christ."

"Mr. Rentoull," said Mabel, "there is so much in the Bible that is discordant and inconsistent with my idea of a just and perfect God, that I have been repelled rather than led to seek instruction there. I prefer God's book of nature, which never contradicts itself.

'My religion is love, 'tis the softest and purest ;  
My temple the universe, the fairest and surest.  
I worship my God in His works which are fair,  
And make joy of my life in perpetual prayer.'

I cannot get nearer, or understand more of God than in His works. It would mar all my conception of beauty and harmony, were I to admit that finite wisdom can know more than infinite love has cared to reveal. Human conception has already distorted His fair creation with its monster ogre, sitting on a judgment-seat between a vague

kind of heaven and a burning lake, exalting one to this, condemning another to that. What could be more horrible or disgusting?"

"Human conceptions of things usually are imperfect, Miss Harrington, we cannot rise much above the material, but Divine wisdom has met our necessity even there, to complete perfection in Jesus Christ. To this perfection all His creation tends, even Divine love can reach no farther than its consummation on the cross. I admit, joyfully, nature reveals God, but it is in His Bible you will find Christ and the Christian life and conduct mapped out for us by His tender feet, from the cradle to the sepulchre. Pantheism fails to satisfy the cravings of the soul. Christ is to man the quickening breath of life which makes his heart to beat in unison with God. Whose opinion are you giving when you condemn the Bible, Miss Harrington?"

"My own, of course," said Mabel.

"What, have you then studied it from end to end with honest eyes, undimmed by prejudice, and a heart receptive to its teaching, otherwise, you are not qualified to give your judgment, either to applaud or to condemn. Never allow another mind to do duty for your own in things of so much vital importance. Promise me, Miss Harrington, that you will search the Scripture for yourself, without narrowing down your soul to prejudice; giving it your brightest moments, not the fag end of a day's fatigue. As a literary gem it is unequalled, as a history of the progress of humanity it is invaluable. You will find it full of sweet surprises, unerring in its judgment, and fearless in reproof. Will you read it, Miss Harrington?"

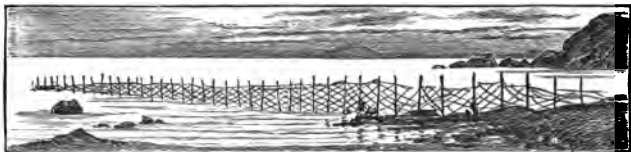
"I could scarcely fail to do so, after such an eulogy, but it will be curiosity which prompts me, Mr. Rentoull."

"I care not what you name the power which leads you, I am satisfied to wait. 'God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform.' But, see, Miss Harrington, your pale France is smiling now on Germany, whose glory is setting, while hers will brighten every hour. I fear I have detained you too late among the hills, the evenings are so chill, let me wrap your shawl about you. Now, take my arm, please don't object, I followed you so meekly up the hill, and now I claim to help you down its rugged side."

"Thanks, no. Let me be free, I like to run, it circulates the blood. I'll take your arm if you can catch me, Mr. Rentoull, I am off."







### CHAPTER XIII.

## *THE SEASONS—*

### *A DIGRESSION.*

GOD'S earth, how beautiful it is in all its changing seasons, so typical of woman.

Lovely spring, like girlhood with her lap heaped full of flowers, laughing beneath her daisy wreath, chirping and singing with the voice of birds, and kissing with the breath of mignonette and wild sweet briar. Awaking promises of constancy from man, remembered only in the purity of her inspiring presence.

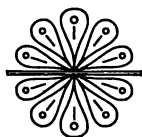
Then summer, woman perfect in her rich ripe loveliness, gathering rare trousseau for her bridal morn, blushing with consciousness of her own power, burning to yield her treasures to the sun.

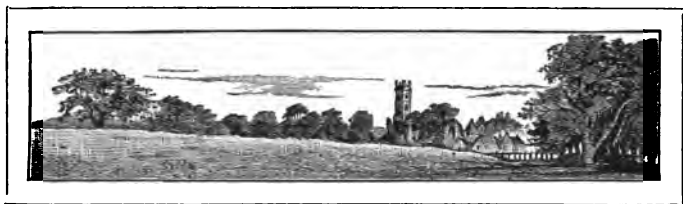
And autumn, glorious golden autumn, perfect, matured in mind, and form, and purpose. Womanlike, great with the satisfaction of bestowing all, and keeping none, flinging her golden wreaths on every side, leaving her own fair forehead decked with thorns, with lingering perfume of sweet withered flowers.

And last, winter, the earth as a pale mother, interesting in her snow-white bed; the great Physician, God, bending over her, binding, restoring, chiding and soothing, opening fresh founts of life from hidden wells in her own heart, to soothe the wailing of her hungry child.

O season of deep awe and mystery, man holds his little breath in fear, while God works underneath the current of the earth; angels peep out through heaven's bright stars, and forests, with uncovered heads, bow down; the ocean roars its psalm, while thunders clap.

This is the consummation. "It is finished." God's earth awaits the resurrection morn.





#### CHAPTER XIV.

#### *EDEN HERMITAGE—IN THE ARBOUR.*

EDEN Hermitage was beautiful this afternoon in May, and Vera Rathbone looked lovely in her hawthorn bower, while butterfly and bird dared desperate risk to peep at her.

Vera, dressed in a gown of pale rose pink, with mysterious puffs and ruches of soft fluffy white, was submitting will and intellect to the bewitching and enslaving power of Ouida's "Strathmore." At her feet sat a boy of five years old, with a face like a cherub, and curls the colour of a sunbeam. He was ever plying his companion with questions too deep for her philosophy; expounding his own theory of things, with blue eyes distended to their fullest power, and white dimpled hands touching her pink cheek softly to coax her attention to him. His baby prattle disturbed her, she was absorbed in her own enjoyment, and wearied of his ceaseless talk. So, flinging aside her book impatiently, the beautiful Vera forgot herself so much, she frowned.

“What meaningless little imbeciles children are,” she exclaimed, impatiently. “Claudie, I feel inclined to pinch you, you are so troublesome. Next time your mother goes from home she must not inflict me with your company. I do not see why you are not left with ‘Doddie’ and nurse.”

“‘Cause, Auntie, ‘Doddie’ never wakes up to talk to me. When Dr. Courtney brought him home to my house, he said, ‘Here’s a brother for you, Master Claud, you won’t feel lonely now no more.’ But ‘Doddie’ can’t tell me things I want to know, he only squeaks and laughs when I speak loud to him; but mamma says his tongue will grow. Nurse shook me ‘cause I put a spoon right down his froat, like Dr. Courtney does, to see which end ’tis growing at.”

“Oh, Claudie, you might have killed your little brother.”

“And if I killed him, Auntie, would he be dead?”

“Yes.”

“Well, then, I’ll kill him quite, then he’ll be an angel with gold wings. I wonder if it hurts the angels too, when little boys pull off their wings, mamma says it do hurt flies.”

Mrs. Rathbone’s look and cry of horror were suppressed by the opportune arrival of Mabel Harrington and Mr. Rentoull. “I am sure you are at home to me, Pinkie,” said Mabel, as Mrs. Rathbone daintily kissed both her cheeks. “Marjory shocked Mr. Rentoull by informing him she would enquire if you were at home, when he says he could see you in the bower.”

“Of course, I am always at home to you, Mabie, and I must evidently give *carte-blanche* for two—you are welcome, Mr. Rentoull. Claudie, tell Marjory to serve

tea in the arbour at once. I am so glad to have some one to talk to, I am tired of reading, and I am tired of everything. You make it most difficult for me to be gracious to you, sir, for you have robbed me of my pet companion, and really you are making her a most demure little piece."

"You will not be able to complain of my monopoly much longer, Mrs. Rathbone, I have come to say good-bye. I return to London to-morrow night."

"To London, oh, Mr. Rentoull, how I envy you. I wish we were going too."

"Do you not like Edinburgh, Mrs. Rathbone?"

"I am tired of it," said Vera, shaking her graceful little head, and sighing wearily, as she flung herself down on a rustic seat, near Mabel's side, encircling her with her arms. "It is a most dead-alive place at this season of the year. Nobody that is anybody at all, stays here now. Every one is off to Paris or London, there is nothing in the Opera House or Theatre but Christy Minstrels and Jubilee Singers; and no society but musty theologians and fossilised antiquarians. I wish Percy would take me to London for a month, I am sure he ought to be tired of scribble, scribbling in that dreary study, and dissecting dead cats and rabbits, ugh, horrible!"

"Well, Vera darling," said Mabel, eagerly, "I envy you, I should just delight in smuggling myself into a corner of the laboratory, and watching all those mysterious experiments of Mr. Rathbone's. I will ask him if he will take me as an apprentice."

"You would be blown into atoms, or poisoned. I hear fearful sounds issuing from that room, he is a regular

‘Bluebeard,’ I assure you, I would not open that door for the world. So, you see, Mr. Rentoull,” continued Mrs. Rathbone, looking pathetically into Ernest’s face, as he sat on the end of the seat, near Mabel, thoughtfully pulling to pieces a spray of lilac. “I am all alone, no congenial companionship, I am sure you don’t wonder that I weary, a day seems interminable, though I stay in bed till twelve o’clock. I am sure I shall be ill if I do not get a change. Percy suggests the Highlands, that would kill me outright, or drive me melancholy mad. What am I to do, Mr. Rentoull?”

“Yours is a common malady, and needs a physician, may I prescribe for you, Mrs. Rathbone?”

“Oh, certainly, I was not aware that you had studied medicine, Mr. Rentoull, if you can convince my husband that my health is being impaired through this monotonous life, he will attend to it *instantly*.”

“This fearful *ennui* is occasioned by a surfeit of pleasure and self-indulgence, and by the stagnation of moral and spiritual virtues through lack of use. If you wish to see your burden grow less, come out of the fetid atmosphere of self; breathe the sweet breath of charity, and lend a listening ear to the wants and miseries of others. Want of occupation has killed more souls than you or I can count, Mrs. Rathbone, and it is not the least regretful fact that their bodies still remain to encumber the earth. The gospel of usefulness is the Gospel of Christ. Idleness is condemned all through the Scripture, from the day God created Adam to till the soil to the Amen of the Revelation.”

The beautiful colour gradually forsook Vera’s cheeks and

lips as she noted the intense earnestness with which Mr. Rentoull spoke, and the implied rebuke which her own conscience too readily accepted.

"Sir," she said, rising haughtily to her feet, "my position as hostess, in the absence of my husband, has compelled me to listen silently to what I must characterise as a most insolent speech, marked by great presumption. I have no taste for sermons, and if you wish to rehearse your next Sunday's discourse, the grounds are at your disposal, but I beg leave to retire."

Earnest had also risen to his feet, and a pained look crossed his frank, genial face as Mrs. Rathbone swept past him, in evident displeasure. Mabel hid her embarrassment by running out to the lawn to meet Claudie, who, having given his message to the maid, was calling lustily for Mr. Rentoull to come and play croquet. Mabel knew her absence would be acceptable, and afford an opportunity to Mr. Rentoull of restoring peace.

"Pray, do not let us part in anger, Mrs. Rathbone," said Mr. Rentoull, bending to lift "Strathmore," which had fallen as Vera rose; "you would reproach yourself. Remember, you gave me your consent to prescribe for you. When a surgeon is called to operate on a patient, he does not stand upon ceremony, or allow any flimsy gew-gaws to bar his access to the wound; and the cure is most perfect when the knife cuts deepest. You are too amiable to retain your displeasure long; too highly gifted to be satisfied with the excitement of fiction; and too beautiful to be hidden in a ball-room or a theatre; it is only reality which can please a soul like yours. You have confessed it in your cry of weariness in the midst of almost every

comfort the world can give. Your empty hands want filling; they are groping about and only grasping at shadows. Try my prescription—occupation. Engross your attention with the wants of others, and, with a little of your own superfluous bounty you may give to another what you are seeking for yourself—contentment,—and out of their joy will spring great happiness for you. Only try it! Look out from self and you will find that every heart has its own bitterness, and only in doing good to others shall we find rest for ourselves. Happiness is goodness, and goodness is happiness.”

“You have evidently formed a very poor opinion of my character, Mr. Rentoull,” said Vera scornfully. “To what particular branch of salvation work do you recommend me to devote my beauty and talent?”

“You are mistaken, Mrs. Rathbone,” said Ernest gently, “it is the high opinion I have formed of you which leads me to take a liberty I should not take with one whom I esteemed less. You are seeking for happiness, and I tell you emphatically, the good are always happy in whatever circumstances they are placed. The little annoyances of daily life, and even the greater sacrifices and afflictions can no more touch the deep joy and peace of the Christian soul than the passing clouds can touch the sun itself, it will always rise out of them to contentment.”

Here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a maid, who proceeded to arrange a tempting tea service on a small rustic table. The dainty shrimp and water-cress sandwiches looked most inviting. Mr. Rentoull was closely watching Mrs. Rathbone. The haughty look was still on her face, but there was a suspicious glistening in



her eyes which looked very like tears forced back by the thinly compressed lips.

"I was about to take my leave, Mrs. Rathbone," said Ernest gaily, "but this is too tempting. May I call Miss Harrington?"

"'Miss Harrington' and Claud do not require to be called, sir," said Mabel, peeping in like a ray of sunshine. "Please, Aunt Vera, may Claudie take tea with us? I will be security for his good behaviour. He fears you will banish him because he is not a big boy like Mr. Rentoull."

"If he can sit quiet he may remain," said Vera as she poured out the fragrant tea.

"Yes, Aunt Vera, I'll be ever so quiet," said Claudie. Then fixing his large blue eyes on Mrs. Rathbone, he clasped his fat little dimpled hands together, exclaiming, "You can't say 'Bother the grace' to-day, Auntie, 'cause the curate's here. I say 'Be present at our table, Lord'; what did your Mamma teach you to say, Mr. Rentoull?"

The embarrassment of the ladies was not lessened by Master Claud's remark, but Mr. Rentoull calmly and reverently bowed his head and said, "Listen, Claudie—'O God our Father, Giver of all good gifts and Source of all happiness; Thou great Searcher of the human heart, sanctify our thoughts and acts, that we may not be ashamed before Thee; that whether we eat or whether we drink, or whatsoever we do, it shall be done to the glory of God. Amen.'"



## CHAPTER XV.

### *AT DINNER WITH THE RATHBONES.*

THE Rathbones dined at five, and the appetizing tea was only over in time to allow the ladies to make a hasty toilet, for Mr. Rathbone demanded punctuality.

Mabel and Ernest had consented to remain and spend the evening, bribed by the promise of choice music.

"I am charmed to see you, Mabel," said Mr. Rathbone, as he led her to the dining-room, gently patting the hand which rested on his arm, for Mabel was a special favourite of his. "Vera has missed you, and, poor darling, she wants a little cheering, you can do it. I sometimes feel self-reproach for bringing her gay young life down to my monotonous existence. We are both beginning to feel a want of interest in each other's pursuits. I speak to you in confidence, dear girl, you are so much above the average woman we meet. When you marry, Mabel, see that your husband's tastes and studies are congenial with your own, and let this—more than personal admiration

or romantic sentiment—influence your decision. As my friend, Charles Dickens, has put it, ‘there is no disparity in marriage like unsuitability of mind and purpose.’”

“How flexible is man’s will,” said Mr. Rentoull, bending gracefully down to the *petit* figure at his side, and admiring the daintily gloved hand resting so lightly on his arm, as he escorted her to the dining-room. “You ladies have such bewitching power, here am I consenting to break a promise.”

“Yes, but your vocation gives you licence, it is your duty to oblige, even at the point of sacrifice,” said Vera, laughing softly.

“Who could count it sacrifice to be in your company, Mrs. Rathbone?”

“I did not know clerical gentlemen were so gallant, sir.”

“We are what our opportunities and inspirations make us, madame, and even a clergyman cannot shut his eyes to beauty.”

“No, but sometimes a husband can,” said Vera, laughing, signifying Mr. Rathbone’s intent face, as he spoke to Mabel, and placed her near himself at the table.

Vera had quite recovered her spirits, and there was no lack of small talk during dinner. Mrs. Rathbone liked company, especially the company of gentlemen, she liked attention, admiration and flattery, she had the art of drawing forth compliments to herself; more than once Mr. Rentoull felt the sting of reproach for allowing himself to be ensnared into words and acts of gallantry which might have been attributed to admiration of the woman.

“Our immediate presence would only be an infliction on the ladies,” said Mr. Rathbone, as Mr. Rentoull

returned to his seat, after bowing them gracefully out. "We neither of us smoke, it is as pleasant here as in the library. I am pleased you will share my indulgence, I do enjoy a cup of coffee after dinner—that is a bit of rare stilton. Well, what do you think of Edinburgh, Mr. Rentoull, is it not a magnificent city, the right place for a student? we have some of the greatest intellects here. It is certainly not a place for sociability, and we get the name of being cold and dry, but there is a lot of heat in the controversy just now with the Geological Society, they will not allow any of the dry bones to remain unearthed. I should imagine some of you biblical men were beginning to shake in your shoes over the threatened security of your Bible, as the foundation of your religion."

"Personally, Mr Rathbone, my faith in God is not built upon the Bible so much as my own inner experience and convictions, the Bible is a help, divinely given and divinely kept, as its most wonderful history proves; but take it away if you like—or if you can—we are still secure. You have merely removed one of the stepping stones up to the cross of Christ, and made it a little harder for weak feet to tread."

"Now, look here, Mr. Rentoull, a man of your education will surely not allow himself to be gulled by the childish fables of the Old Testament, not speaking at the present of the New. You surely cannot sit there and tell me that you believe in the story of the creation, and the old nursery fable of the Garden of Eden, literally."

"Partly, and partly figurative."

"But, my good sir, there was animal life existing ages before the creation of Adam and Eve."

"I do not dispute it, but God's revelation to man for all ages on, dates from the creation of Adam. This was the beginning of a new era; hitherto, the earth was without form, and void of mind, all was matter in which God found no pleasure, in creating Adam He embodied mind, which was an impartation from God Himself."

"My opinion," said Mr. Rathbone, "is, if there was a Divine revelation given to man, it would have been indisputable, accurate and consistent in its statements, and characterized by greater power over human life and conduct. It would be only natural to expect perfection from the source attributed to it."

"In the first place," replied Mr. Rentoull, "you may search the literature of all ages and all nations, and you will find no book to compare with the Bible. It has defied criticism and still holds its honoured place. The inconsistency and imperfections you mention are the finger-marks of humanity, but they do not affect the Book itself, any more than the blots made by a bad pen destroy the meaning of the writer. But even perfection finds presumptuous doubters, whose paltry finite wisdom disputes because it cannot comprehend the magnitude of God's love incarnate in Christ."

"What I object to in you parsons," said Mr. Rathbone with evident irritability, "is, that you are not practical. You either will not or can not reason. You want us to accept too much on faith. I cannot accept a religion which is enveloped in so much mystery and jugglery of creed. It must be as broad and clear as daylight."

"We are not responsible for the entanglements of creed which have been woven by the Church around the religion

of Christ. I can assure you they are as objectionable to me as to the many others who desire to see His Kingdom come on earth, and have done more harm in keeping men outside the Church than anything else I know. But this is an age of independent thought and liberty of judgment. You are free! Tear down all the flummery and trappings of the Church; walk with your own feet and see with your own eyes. To me nothing God does seems strange or mysterious. I have ceased to be amazed at anything but His marvellous patience with man in his defiant disobedience and dogmatical unbelief."

"I do not consider your Gospel is a healthy one; it shrivels the intellect, stifles progress, and cramps the brightest impulses of our nature; it induces morbid thoughts, with the lash of eternal punishment ever afflicting us. We have it here in our own nature—the yea and the nay. There is a moral law governing all things which demands obedience or exacts a penalty.

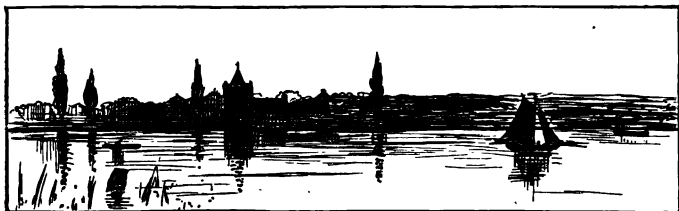
'These needeth not the hell that bigots frame  
To punish those who err. Earth in itself  
Contains at once the evil and the cure;  
And all-sufficing nature will chastise  
Those who transgress her laws.  
She only justly can proportion to the fault  
The punishment it merits.'"

"I cannot say I am fond of religious controversy," said Mr. Rentoull. "I do not know of any who have found the truth by that means. There is a difference between the seeker for knowledge and the possessor. One given to argument usually takes the latter position, and his receptive faculties are accordingly closed against conviction

of anything save his own superior wisdom. Humility loses nothing. 'He who is last shall be first;' it is the empty vessel which will be chosen to be filled. As for me, like Paul, 'I am determined to know nothing save Christ and Him crucified.' Take away religion from the world and you have only ruin and destruction before you. Morality will not save you, any more than the plank of wood, carried by the current to the whirlpool will save the drowning man who clings to it. Christ is the only Rock of Salvation. I should feel happy, Mr. Rathbone, to know that you had reverently and humbly decided to consider the claim of Christ upon your will and obedience. Nothing could be more complete or more essential than His atonement fitting into our lives and filling up all our needs. 'I am the true Vine, ye are the branches; My Father is the Husbandman.' O, be ingrafted in Him as the partaker of His righteousness, and bear fruit like unto Him."

"I think," said Mr. Rathbone, rising, "We had better join the ladies. I should believe more in the sincerity of you preachers were it not a paid calling. But I look upon all clergymen as prigs and sneaks. You, sir, are an exception. The hirelings of the Church do not usually carry on their vocation outside the pulpit, if they can avoid it, but, like the mason and the carpenter, they fling down their tools when their day's work is finished."

"It is the love of Christ which constrains me. I am not a hireling of the Church, my dear friend, I am a volunteer."



## CHAPTER XVI.

### *GOOD-BYE.*

"Love comes like flowers at night. It is a flame a single look will kindle, but not an ocean quench, fostered by dreams excited by each thought. Love is a star from heaven that points the way and leads us to its home, a little spot on earth's dry desert, where the soul may rest; a grain of gold in the dull sand of time; a foretaste of Elysium."—*Maria Lovel.*

THE bell of a neighbouring church was ringing ten as the gates of Eden Hermitage closed behind Mabel and Ernest. They each declined the offer of a drive home, the night being so beautiful, and the road which lay before them was particularly picturesque and interesting. Past the nunnery, with its big iron gates, closing in dark walls, wrapped in solemn silence, save for the rustling of the trees, or the flapping wings of bats, which brooded near; then the wide expansive meadows flooded in moonlight, bearded with an avenue of splendid trees, casting mysterious shadows; and beautiful Princes Street, with its fine old castle seated in majestic security



upon its craggy peak, looking grandly down upon the pretty gardens stretching their green mantled breast and foliaged arms to catch and kiss the silvery beams the moon flung down.

One could almost pardon the most practical individual for indulging in sentiment beneath such a sky, and with such surroundings; and, however platonic the affection between Mr. Rentoull and Miss Harrington had been during his brief stay in Edinburgh, we cannot wonder, with the wooing beauty of the night, and the near parting for an indefinite period, the warmer sentiment they both had felt within their breast, though undefined, burst into sudden eloquence of voice and look.

"You seem sad, Miss Harrington," said Ernest, pressing closer against his heart the warm little hand which rested on his arm. "Are you tired? I fear I have been selfish, allowing you to walk. I could not resist the temptation of saying 'good-bye' to you alone."

"Oh, no, Mr. Rentoull, I am not tired," said Mabel. "I do feel a little sad, why, I can hardly explain. I wish Papa would come home, your visit only makes me miss him more, we used to have such happy walks and talks, when you are gone I shall feel—a little lonely—that is all."

"Only a *little*, Miss Harrington? I dare not tell you how lonely I shall feel," and Ernest bent down that he might look into her face.

"You are going away to busy scenes and active labour, and may forget."

"Have you, then, so poor an opinion of my constancy?"

"I have had no need to test your constancy, Mr. Rentoull, you have been most faithful to Papa, in

discharging the trust which he committed to you, but I almost wish you had not come."

"Then you have not yet learnt to look for the divine movement in the small circumstances of our daily life. I have already begun to trace His guidance from the moment my wishes first prompted me to go to Rome till I saw you and your sister that first day we met."

"And do you not mistake your own desire sometimes, misnaming it divine interference. Are your expectations fully realized?"

"If Miss Harrington yields her heart to Christ, and acknowledges Him to be her Saviour, then it will be plain. Your father's prayers and mine will have been answered, and I shall feel He has honoured me by using me as His instrument."

"And should you count that a reward for so much trouble, Mr. Rentoull?"

"When you feel as I do, your heart, too, will thrill with joy at the smallest proof of service done for Christ."

"But you may never know."

"I do not think there is much henceforth, Miss Harrington, which affects your spiritual or temporal well-being but what I shall make it my duty to know. Mabel,—do not be angry with me, but I always call you Mabel in my heart,—shall you dismiss me entirely from your life and thoughts? When I am gone, will you not send me now and then a little token of remembrance?"

"Yes, Mr. Rentoull; I will write if you wish me to."

"Not unless you feel it will be a happiness; not unless you will lay your hand in mine, and,—witnessed by all this loveliness, by those bright stars and fair moon looking down upon us,—you will say, 'Ernest, I love you.'"

"Oh, no, Mr. Rentoull ; you are exceeding your duty to ask me this," said Mabel, and her face suddenly grew so pale in the moonlight that Ernest feared she was about to faint. Gently encircling her waist with his arm, he drew her down to a seat near the gates of the garden, and taking both her hands in his, he said, "Mabel, you are an honest woman ; free from silly affectation, and wise enough to read the hearts of others. Have I awakened so little interest in you that you have left the seal unbroken which would have revealed to you my inmost soul? Do not dissemble, dearest Mabel ; I love you, and you have known it since our eyes first met ; and, no, you dare not deny it, dear, you love me too. Mabel, own the truth ; confess your love for me, that I may carry with me the memory of this happy night as our betrothal."

What demands more courage from a woman than to admit her love? Like a precious bird, she keeps it caged within the "twisted gyves" of her own heart, and fears to free it lest a surfeit kill, or lest it starve and die. Twice Mabel tried to rise, but Ernest gently and firmly forced her down again. Underneath her drooping eyes she was conscious of Ernest's intense gaze, his eyes flashing like stars ; she could hear the loud beating of her own heart, and a rich crimson colour flooded her cheeks and brow as she felt the secret she had scarcely known herself had been revealed to him, and, like crystal dewdrops, tears began to gather and fall on Ernest's hands.

"Are these my only answer, Mabel? They will dissolve away as I would ever wish your tears should do. I want a more substantial answer, that I can treasure in my memory. What ; have I been mistaken, Mabel? Can you not say you love me."

"I do not need to say it. You have said you know I love you." Then raising her pure and soul-like eyes to his, she murmured, "Ernest, I love you."

Then followed sweet confusion. Mabel trembled with the burden of her new-found joy, so suddenly quickened into life. Ernest, with all his practised prudence, felt tempted to linger on the step, when they reached Mabel's home.

"I shall call to-morrow, sweetheart, to say good-bye to Dora, and you will tell me once again what you so sweetly said to-night, will you not, my Mabel?"

"Do I need so often to assure you then?"

"No, dearest love, I do not doubt; but you look so lovely when you call me Ernest. Just once again, before I touch the bell, tell me you will be mine." And Ernest, with his hand beneath her chin, raised her burning face, and looked into her eyes,—unmerciful man,—until her trembling lips said after him, "I am thine, and thou art mine!"

"My certie, bairn, but it's high time yer faither was hame," said Martha, as she barred and chained the door, after grunting rather than speaking good-night to Mr Rentoull, at the end of his graceful apology for detaining Mabel so late. "Yer sister, dacent lassie, has been in her bed this hour an' mair, while ye gang stravaiging the streets wi' yon daft-like student fellow. It wad be wiser like if he'd bide at hame in Lunnon, wi' his fine ways an' muckle talk, an' no come here an' pit simple Scotch lassies aff their heid."

"Please do not be angry with me, Mattie dear," said Mabel, coaxingly, slipping her hand in Martha's arm, and nestling her flushed cheek against her shoulder, as they

descended the stair into the kitchen, from whence issued the inviting song of the kettle and a refreshing aroma of freshly ground coffee. "You are my own kind Mattie. I will be ever so good after to-night, and finish reading David Copperfield to you; only promise not to say any more naughty things about Mr Rentoull."

"I'm no sayin' onything again the lad," said Martha. "He may be well-meaning eneuch, but he's no to come here ony mair till yer faither's hame. I feel it an awfu' responsibility; though I doot the mischief's done a'ready, for yer twa een are shinin' like muckle stars, and yer cheeks as red as they coals burnin' in the grate. He's been talkin' some silly balderdash to gar ye look like that, my woman. Ay, that's what yer minister fowk can dae, an' then pit on their solemn face on the Sabbath, as if they couldna' look a bonnie lassie in the face, or touch a woman wi' a pair o' tangs. I ken them fine! they're aye the warst tae flirt. Tak' yer bit supper, lassie; I'm no angry w' ye, my bairn, but dinna swallow a' the men fowk say. They'll tell ye ye're awfu' bonnie, and that ye're the first woman they ta'en a likin' tae; that they're awfu' lonesome awa' frae hame; they'll swell yer heid wi' flattery, an' thraw yer heart wi' pity, till lassies whiles forget thersel's, an' admit mair in the intoxication o' their presence than they had meant tae; an' the men ken fine if they ance get a lassie under the mesmerism o' their blethers, it's a' bye wi' her. They can just make her dae as they like, an' a' they ever dae like is tae mak' a fule o' a woman."

Martha smoothed the folds of her black satin skirt, and spread out her muslin apron energetically, as she delivered this speech, then folding her plump red hands in her lap, she commenced to spin her thumbs with great vehemence.

Mabel had a faint recollection of poor Martha's early romance: how she had been courted, and robbed of all her hard-earned savings by a designing scoundrel, who had promised to marry her, and to whom she had entrusted her little store the day before the wedding, and how she had found herself standing before the clergyman without a bridegroom, while he was sailing away to America! leaving her a poor woman financially, but the richest of the two in integrity and honour. Martha's opinion of man and his motives had since then undergone a decided change. She maintained women were martyrs and men were sycophants.

When Mabel entered her chamber, she stood for a moment after she had closed the door. Dora had drawn back the curtains from the window, for she loved the moonlight, and the pretty little room was flooded with its beauty. In the soft light Dora's face, lying on the white pillow, with her dark hair straying round about, and her small white hand nestling beneath her fair cheek, looked so spiritual and pure that Mabel, with her poetical nature, lingered to gaze and admire. She could not bear to disturb her; noiselessly she divested herself of her clothing, and now, like a white-robed angel, stood gazing out upon the terrace of houses opposite, lying in shadow while their dwelling was bathed in beauty and light. "A little while ago," thought Mabel, "this was reversed: this room was in darkness; they have had their share of the night's loveliness. O, shall I ever think the world dark again; I am so happy. Ernest, you are like the moon; you have flooded the dark places in my heart with light. I will try and be as good as your love makes me beautiful."



## CHAPTER XVII.

### *SELF-INTROSPECTION.*

“For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He shall come in His glory.”—*Luke ix. 26.*

WHAT a morning! It did indeed seem as though the floodgates of heaven were opened. Down poured the not unwelcome rain, of which the parched ground drank greedily, and then, refreshed, breathed prayers of thankfulness, thrusting her new-born treasures forth to wait the sun, that he might kiss them into purpose—into life.

Mabel Harrington was not beautiful from an artist's point of view, but her face possessed what, to me, is the essence of beauty—soul. I have never yet looked upon an ugly face which mirrored a heart whose faith was fixed on Jesus Christ; and I have never yet thought a face beautiful which was stamped by egotism.

Mabel possessed what the popular beauty too often lacks—health and robustness of form. Her light brown hair was twined in graceful coils, adding to but not distorting the proportions of her shapely head. Attired in a robe of pretty, soft grey, with dainty knots of bright ribbon and lace about her slender throat and round her white arms, she looked at least attractive. She was sitting in her father's study, deep in thought. The London express was timed to leave Waverley Station at five o'clock, and Ernest was coming to say good-bye before then.

Mabel had been living over again the happy hours she had spent with Ernest; recalling their conversations, all tending to direct her thoughts upward to the Throne of Grace, to spiritualise and purify her nature. She could scarcely realise the fact that what a few weeks ago was all her happiness—the theatre, frivolous conversation, and the empty, meaningless compliments of fashionable men—had lost their charm; and her admiration of those disciples of free-thought, philosophy, and morality, with their bombastic self-reliance, so grand in argument, and so weak and easily defeated by the petty annoyances of life, had also lost their fascination for her. She thought with repugnance how she had listened to and chimed in with those who made a caricature of Christianity, mocked at redemption and sneered at the resurrection; blaming God for the weak parts of their nature, affirming that a moral life and the puny efforts of man would win for him the kingdom of heaven.

How scornfully had Mabel curled her lip when Ernest had answered, "Nothing but the blood of Jesus can save or cleanse a living soul." She remembered how indignantly



she had answered, "Your religion may suit the illiterate and depraved, gouty old men and rheumatic women, whose judgments are paralysed and whose taste are morbid." He gently replying, "I am none of these, and yet without Christ I can do nothing." How happy, how calm, how fearless and independent he was, dreading no man's censure, and catering for no man's applause.

What had caused this change she now felt in her aspirations and affections? Not Ernest's avowal of love, for those treasured words were only spoken a few hours ago. Had she done right in accepting and reciprocating the love of such a man? Could she walk with him and help him in his glorious life of self-sacrifice and consecration to the Saviour she had denied. No, it was a mistake, not her love, ah no, but her avowal of it to him. Had she concealed it, he might never have known, he might have forgotten her and sought a companion more worthy. There were women, yes, she had met them, saintly, holy, pure, and beautiful, who could speak just like him about Jesus.

Mabel covered her face with her hands, and burning tears came trickling through her fingers, falling upon her father's desk, and on the little Bible which Ernest had lately given her, with many passages marked for her instruction. A smile brightened up her face as she caught sight of the little book, and taking it in her hands, she pressed it to her lips, exclaiming, "Yes, Ernest, I will read it." Then raising her weeping eyes she prayed, "Heavenly Father, reveal Thyself to me in it as Thou hast done to him."

When Mrs. Harrington temporarily resigned the reins of

domestic authority, handing them over to Martha without restriction, that worthy personage at once decided that Dora and Mabel should assist her, week about; the one not on duty in the kitchen and the pantry to have her time at her own disposal, and to fill the responsible position of mistress. Her motive was a most commendable one. She wished to qualify them for home duties, and so check the growth of laziness in which our girls too often are encouraged to indulge. She prided herself on the model wives she was making them, and not without reason, for they were both apt pupils. They could lay out the domestic purse to the greatest advantage, and they could compete with Martha herself in cooking and baking.

"Ye maun be able baith tae wash a shirt and make yin," said Martha, and she kept them at their work with rigour. "Ye canna tell what sphere o' life ye may be ca'd on tae adorn, an' gin it be a mansion or only a butt an' a ben, see that ye adorn it weel."

This was Mabel's week "upstairs." She must receive the visitors, choose the dinners, keep the purse, and check any insubordination or irregularity down stairs; while Dora might be "up to the elbows" in dough, or, with a wrapper enveloping her pretty little figure, polishing the furniture and the mirrors, and beautifying with soap and towel the finger-plates and handles of the doors.

The little timepiece on the mantel had twice chimed the quarter, but still Mabel sat with her face buried in her hands. She had entered into the most serious conflict she had ever experienced with her own soul. She had been examining herself, for she sought to discover how far her altered convictions were due to human influence and

selfish motives. Had she yet accepted Jesus Christ in her own heart as the Divine Lord? What testimony could she give? If deprived of Ernest's presence, which had been such a power for her, could she stand alone and tell Vera and Mr. Rathbone that she believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that she knew her sins were washed away in the blood of the Lamb? She fancied she saw the cold, sarcastic sneer on Mr. Rathbone's face, and heard the peal of laughter with which her statement would be received by Vera. No, she lacked something. What was it? Ernest could put her right; she always felt strong in his presence, and his Christianity did not seem foolishness. She could listen to him for ever while he was telling stories of men and women whom he had helped to convert. But then she loved Ernest, and that made it all plain and beautiful. Oh! if he only lived near her, she might by-and-by be able to stand alone.

Poor Mabel. Who can stand alone? Not in thine own strength, nor thy friend's strength, but in Christ only canst thou stand, by faith in Him. This revelation had not yet come to Mabel, but, to-day, she felt a void in her heart that intellect could not fill, that philosophy and reason could not explain. The pantheistic god she had worshipped through the beauty of nature, in the perfume of flowers and the song of the birds, could not fill the void now. Her heart was out of tune with everything. She felt, viewed from the light of Ernest's unselfish religion, that she was a discord in the harmony of God's perfect universe. She was poor, helpless, worthless. Self had been her god, and it failed her now. And yet, why did she feel so miserable? Ernest loved her; he must have

thought her worthy, so he need not know of these doubts in her heart, therefore she would hide them from him. Perhaps, after all, she was right and he wrong. He was young, and his religion might be an enthusiasm he would soon outgrow. That old threadbare story had been rejected in the past by many great intellectual men, who died denying the Divinity of Christ. And again, what proof had they that Jesus was the Son of God in the Divine sense of the word. She could be a good wife to Ernest though she did not believe exactly like him, and she would love him none the less for his fanaticism. she would respect his opinions, and could listen to his preaching. If Jesus is the tender, loving Saviour he is represented to be, He would accept her hereafter, though she denied Him now, and would He not rejoice in revealing the truth she found it so hard to believe; and yet this would be the greatest barrier between them.

Mabel felt in her heart a jealousy that she should fill the second place in Ernest's affection. She had heard him say that he could give up every one and everything for Christ, and perhaps some day his love for her would grow cold; he might consider it his duty to care less for her because she did not believe as he did, while she would be content to worship him, and give up father sister, and all, for his sake. It would be easier now than by-and-bye—yes, she must do it now; she could not bear to see him grow cold or indifferent. "Oh, Ernest," she passionately exclaimed, "I am not a Christian; I love you better than the vague, shadowy Christianity which, to me, is so unreal, so uncertain. I love you too much to deceive you, but I cannot love the God who sent you to me

according to your theory, and then showed me in my heart that I was too unworthy."

A little silver cuckoo popped its head in and out of the timepiece, persistently announcing that the hour was twelve. Mabel rose to her feet and revealed a face which bore evidence of severe mental struggle. The colour had forsaken her lips and cheeks, and down the centre of her clear white forehead was one deep line expressing thought.

The rain still poured unceasingly, and Mabel shivered as she gazed out at the grey sky and the uninviting street. She leaned her head against the window sash, reflecting how she could best escape an interview with Ernest, without having to explain her motive to Martha and Dora, for she had decided not to see him again. She would write a letter and pour out her heart to him in her usual honest, outspoken manner, when he had returned home.

Mabel knew when Martha instituted a law, she was dogmatical in her demand for obedience, and nothing upset the equilibrium of her temper more readily than insubordination. Without intending to be rebellious, Mabel determined to be firm. With a sigh she turned from the window, and placing her little Bible in her bosom, she left the room.

Dora was busy in the kitchen, her attention being divided between an immense pot of soup and an array of pies and tarts of different shapes and sizes, which her dainty fingers were trimming and ornamenting with leaves and birds, cut from a thin sheet of paste rolled out on her baking board.

Dora had the privilege of all the scraps and residue of the kitchen which, though the household was not large at

present, with a little help from her pocket money, allowed her to relieve the wants of her favourite poor. Nothing was wasted in the Harrington household.

Dora was not a little surprised when her sister entered, attired in a black waterproof mantle, which enveloped her from head to foot, the hood being drawn over her little grey turban hat.

"Oh, Mabel, you are surely not going out this wet morning," said Dora, "you do not look well; is there anything wrong?"

"Where is Martha," asked Mabel, without noticing her sister's remark?"

"Upstairs, putting away the linen. Do you want her?"

"No. Will you do me a favour, 'Mousie?'" and Mabel kissed her sister tenderly on her brow. "Do not try to persuade me to remain in the house, or let Martha know till I am away, as she would consider it her duty to command me to stay at home. I will tell you all about it some other time, dear. Mr. Rentoull will be here, Dollie, to say good-bye. Tell him I left my adieux with you, and that I will write. I cannot see him to-day."

"Mabel, my darling, I will do anything you ask me, if you can convince me that it is right; but where can you be going on such a day? Your conduct lately has been so much more as it used to be before you began to visit the Rathbones, and I hoped Mr. Rentoull had given you a taste for a more abiding and satisfying kind of happiness than Vera can offer you."

Mabel's heart throbbed painfully; she bit her parched lips. How she would like to have stayed and talked with Dora, and confided all her love, her doubts and fears to her; but Ernest might be here any moment. "I may seldom

see Vera after to-day, Dollie. Even my 'little Puritan' would say, Go, if I had time to explain. Will you trust me, dearest, for once, and ask no questions till I return? Be kind to Ern—I mean Mr. Rentoull, and pray for me, Sissy"—and she was gone.

When Mabel found herself outside in the pouring rain, it was with no fixed purpose save to avoid Mr. Rentoull. She would remain away till the five o'clock express had started for London. It did not once occur to her that her conduct might detain him longer in Edinburgh.

The *denouement* of his visit was so sudden and unexpected. The warm colour mounted to her cheeks as she thought how short a time she had known him, and how easily he had won from her an avowal of her affection. And yet, during the few weeks he had lived in Edinburgh, he was constantly at her side, making the poem of her life within her heart, first the song and then the melody. Was it strange that he, the composer, should seek to touch the thrilling cord and wake the whole to harmony, that he might hear, alas, the instrument was out of tune, and her own heart had made a discord? But is it discord? O, Mabel Harrington, rejoice! thy stubborn knees are seldom bent in prayer, but he who sought thy love sought first his Heavenly Father's blessing, and even now he prays for the ingrafting of thy soul in Christ, and through the courts of heaven thy name is spoken by angel tongues, and their swift wings and searching eyes flash through thy soul, and in their glory show thee thy unworthiness.

Rejoice! for the Creator of all created harmony has touched the rusty wires; bear every wrench, and grate, and rasp with joy: 'tis the beginning of diviner, sweeter melody.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### *THE "SNUG"—MABEL AND VERA.*

"TELL Marjory to fetch me my work-basket. No, never mind; hand me my easel. No; who could paint in such weather? Give me "Moths" out of the library, and send me a glass of mulled claret; I must have something to stimulate me. No, no, Percy, never mind; do not go away; you need not send anything. If I could swim I would go out; my poor head aches so."

Mr. Rathbone flung a spray of delicious perfume over his wife, as she lay back in her reading chair, her head nestled in soft pillows—fretting and complaining at everything.

"My poor darling," he said, bending tenderly over her, and bathing her forehead gently with eau-de-cologne, "I must leave you for a little while, but I will return soon."

"I wish I was a man. You are well off to have a change. It is horrible to be shut up in this dreary place with no one to talk to."



"May I send round for Claudie, dear?"

"Thank you, Mr Rathbone, for selecting a companion my equal in intellect. You know I have no patience with children."

Mr. Rathbone gently stroked his wife's cheek, as he replied, "You are not very well, pet; how would you like to come this evening and hear me read my paper to the students and nurses on 'Ventilation and the use of common salt and carbolic soap as a disinfectant?'"

"No, thank you," said Vera, scornfully, "I do not care to risk smallpox, even for such an attractive subject."

A pained look crossed Mr. Rathbone's face; he was trying to be patient, but he felt he could not trust himself much longer. Bending down, he kissed his wife's forehead, adjusted her pillows carefully, and, with a "good morning, my love," in a tone which betrayed sadness, he left the room.

"I wish he was like other men," said Vera peevishly, "I wonder I had not more discernment than to marry such a fossil. He should have married an antiquated dowager, with lace mittens and spectacles, who could have sat all day long by his side, in his musty old laboratory, knitting sox and nodding her head with approval while he read his dreary essays. I am afraid I shall elope some day. Even that sanctimonious parson has some 'go' in him; I could have borne that, and should have shone at mothers' meetings and Dorcas societies. I believe I have mistaken my sphere altogether. He prescribed usefulness. Well, if that is what he calls useful, I will volunteer my services. If he only had a church here, what fun it would be to wear a black frock and linen collar, and go about with a Bible

in my hand, with a long face, reading to gouty old men and women, and prescribing cod liver oil and chemical food for croupy infants." Vera was so much amused that she forgot her headache, and laughed out loud, rising to her feet just as the servant admitted Mabel Harrington. She had left her wet cloak in the hall, and still wore her pretty grey morning dress. Mrs. Rathbone was all fun and frolic now, and would likely continue in this mood till her husband returned, when she would again adopt her favourite means of keeping him from his study to attend upon her.

"You have confirmed my belief in fairies, dear. How were you transported; not on a rose leaf, to-day? was it in a dewdrop?" said Vera, encircling her friend's waist with her arm, and leading her to a low seat near the fire.

The cosy little apartment in which they were seated Vera had christened the "snug"—a small room originally intended for a dressing-room, one of its two doors opening into her bedroom, the other into the lobby. It was seldom without a fire, summer or winter, and everything it contained was conducive to warmth and comfort—low chairs with spring backs, yielding to every pose of the head, upholstered in rich, soft plush, with pillows of down encased in silk, where the tired head might nestle; costly and exquisite rugs, strewn here and there above the rich turkey carpet, with animals' heads gaping to receive the cold little feet, where they might safely nestle in spite of staring green eyes. Here Mrs. Rathbone spent her mornings—it was the rarest thing for her to appear at breakfast down stairs—that meal Mr. Rathbone usually enjoyed in solitude, unless, as was frequently the case, he chose to tell Marjory

to carry it up to the "snug." Attired in a bewitching morning gown, charmingly *negligée*, she dawdled away the early golden hours, reading her favourite "Ouida," or lazily dreaming and sipping claret with a *souffron* of brandy and lemon.

Vera Rathbone was idle, fond of pleasure and self-indulgence, but she was not the most selfish of women; she was not content with being happy herself; she could not bear to see, or even think, of sadness or suffering, and though she tried to avoid contact with it, she often tried to alleviate the misery of others if made aware of it. She loved the sunshine, the song of birds, the colour of the flowers; but she could not admire or find pleasure in the restful side of nature; the wooing evening made her creepy, and she sought the artificial means of obtaining light; the majestic night, with its canopy of stars and silvery moon, reminded her of the churchyard where her dead parents lay, and forced her into greater need of excitement; and the thunder—poor Vera, trembling, prostrate, dare not be alone!

Oh, for a world all light like her own pictures! Why was death needful? Why black, ugly days like this one was? the sky should always be clear and blue. She hated the very name of Rembrandt, and oh, how she feared to die!

Vera's quick eye detected a change in Mabel's demeanour—a pallid cheek and subdued manner.

"Why so sad, Mable dear?" she asked; "are you fretting for your comely parson? Has he not left a tender souvenir behind, that you can sometimes gaze upon and kiss? I know that he is smitten, dear. I know the symptoms of young cupid's darts. Mind, I have eyes—*m'amie*, Mable's in love."

Mabel blushed painfully; she was sorry Vera guessed her secret. Mrs. Rathbone was the last woman she would choose to make her *confidante*. She had come here for shelter; but for the inclement weather she would have sought seclusion in her favourite retreat among the crags—she longed to be alone. Vera saw her embarrassment, and rattled on. "I do not blame you, dear, for I confess if I were free I could admire him too, although he is somewhat bold and quick to censure. I'd cure him soon of that and bring him to his proper level, teach him to honour women. Man is our subordinate, save in finance and politics. 'I have no patience that a free-born woman should sink the high tone of her noble nature down to a slavish whisper for that compound of frail mortality they call a man, and give her charter to make a tyrant.'"

"There you and I must differ, Vera; I should despise the man who yields to be domineered over by a woman; I should maintain my claim to his esteem, for without that affection ceases to be love in its exalted form, and levels us with soulless animals. My husband must be my master, both physically and intellectually. Oh, what contempt I always feel for an obedient husband."

"What a patient worm you mean to be," said Mrs. Rathbone, scornfully; "a dull domestic drudge, to be abused or fondled as the fit may work upon him. But really, dear, all joking laid aside, your parson has converted me; I'm going to try his remedy for discontent. I'll turn philanthropist; give breakfasts to the poor; hold kitchen meetings, and you shall be my partner, Mabie, for you have grown so prim. I'll read and you shall pray."

Though Mabel was quite accustomed to Mrs. Rathbone's

flippant talk, she felt a shudder creep over her to-day. It seemed like blasphemy, and a sense of guilt began to make her feel she was responsible for this style of conversation, because she had never opposed it, and conscience was loudly exclaiming, Condemn it now. Happy Mabel! the ingrafting has begun; it is the evidence of His Holy Spirit working within you. Yield to be transplanted in Him, and none shall pluck thee out of His hand.

"You are speaking in jest, Vera dear, upon a subject which has begun to occupy my most serious thoughts. For the last few months, I have been helping you to waste your life in idleness. Can we not employ our talents and time to some purpose beneficial to others? We have wasted as much time and thought over the designing of a dress for a drawing-room entertainment, as would have fed and clothed many poor children; and with what end in view? Simply to win admiration from men, and create envy in women. Our most magnificent achievement ends in no abiding satisfaction. When I look round and consider the manner in which the blessings of this world are distributed, I am persuaded a great responsibility rests upon us. All men are equal in the sight of God—one has strength, one has talent, one has wealth. Your money does not make you more entitled to honour than my talent, or that man's strength, unless properly applied. We are taking more than our share, if we gratify any indulgence, knowing others to be in need. I have been with Dora, once or twice, visiting some of the slums round about High Street, and we had to take a candle to light us up the steep broken stairs, which were so narrow, we could only ascend one at a time, and so high that I thought we

should never reach the top. There were whole families huddled together, seven or eight persons in one tiny room, which they called 'home.' In one house, a coffin, containing the dead body of a woman was being utilised as a table, round which a crowd of hungry children gathered to eat their musty, dirty crusts."

"Upon my word, Miss Harrington, you have caught the contagion of the depressing atmosphere. Let me go back to my reading chair and pose as 'Resignation.' Now proceed." Vera lay back among her cushions, and crossed her white hands upon her breast, assuming a comical look of patience, as Mabel continued.

"Do you think we have any right to shut out these painful sights from our thoughts? I have done it too long. I am ashamed to say that I, like you, have tried to avoid contact with human misery, and persuaded myself that I was doing my duty, in handing out a few shillings to charities, or by giving my cast-off clothing to Dollie, for distribution among the poor. You have lightly remarked that you are going to try Mr. Rentoull's prescription for happiness and usefulness. Vera, be in earnest, let us begin life anew to-day; redeem the past by an unselfish future."

"You wax eloquent, *m'amie*, but *you* have a motive power to spur you on, *par amour*."

"Our motive power should be the same humanity," said Mabel, gently disregarding the sentimental gesture which accompanied the implied accusation.

"Well, really," said Mrs. Rathbone, with a slight display of irritability, "I think I do very well, indeed I give quite a large sum of money to various schemes, and

all my household waste goes somewhere, for some charity or other, I can't tell exactly what."

"Yes, Vera dear, but that is only part of their appeal to us. Their more plaintive cry is for our sympathy, and recognition of their oneness in the universe of God. It is by personal contact that we must expect to elevate and improve their condition, morally."

"You will never persuade me to enter those fever dens, Mabel," said Vera with a shudder, and rising from her recumbent position, she continued, "Such a life may suit old maids with sallow complexions and freckly faces, or reclaimed drunkards, who feel it their duty to impose a penalty on themselves for past misdemeanour, but it will never suit Vera; so please do not try. I should recommend that all the low parts of the city be set on fire. Those people are like vermin, and it would be a good riddance, as they only breed misery and disease."

"Oh, Vera, and yet these are the people for whom Jesus showed the most love and compassion, and from their midst He raised some beautiful examples of purity and virtue. Mr. Rentoull has told me, when preaching to the poor in London, he has brought in from the street some of the most worthless looking creatures and placed them on fine cushioned seats near himself, and the dejected, sneakish look would leave their faces, as they were conscious of being treated as men. It is suspicion and snubbing which lowers them. Fear engenders hatred, but trust and sympathy brings out the higher aspirations, and they will seek to rise to equality with us. Why should we dare, on the strength of our more favourable worldly position, to say that these poor creatures are inferior to ourselves, until we have given them an oppor-

tunity. On whom does the responsibility rest, if not upon us?"

"What an apt pupil Mr. Rentoull has found in you," said Vera. "All my teaching goes for nothing. He has taken you back to your plebeian affections. I wait with interest to hear your testimony that you are *saved*."

There was a time, only a few weeks gone, when this remark would have called forth a merry laugh and grimace, but, to-day, it touched Mabel with a new meaning. She felt, what she had never felt before, that she *had* a testimony to give. All her old theories were tumbling to pieces. She found herself communing with and hearkening to that mysterious inner voice, never a moment silent, imperative to be heard. Astonished at her own utterances, she felt those careless words were teaching her the meaning of *conversion*.

The beautiful colour came and went like patches of light on her fair face, and she felt her heart beat violently against the precious little Book concealed in her bosom. Oh, what a mine of wealth lay hidden there which she had yet to fathom. Flashes of truth which are as a scourge to the guilty, but as a lamp to the feet of those who seek the Lord; garlands of beauty, ripe for the hands of Faith to pluck and twine around the Christian brow.

Vera Rathbone gave her graceful shoulders a disgusted shrug as she gazed at the dreary scene outside and then at the absorbed face of her friend. With a weary yawn, she crossed the room, then turning to Mabel as she opened the door, exclaimed, "I have a few orders to issue in the lower regions, and I am tired of this chapter of horrors. Please turn over a new leaf against I return," after which she vanished.





## CHAPTER XIX.

### *INGRAFTED.*

MABEL had an intense yearning to be alone. She longed to prostrate herself before that Divine Presence which she was feeling so intensely near her during the last few hours, supporting, guiding, reproofing and sustaining.

She had always maintained that God was too great and glorious to be mixed up with man's material circumstances, that the little affairs of human life worked independent of divine interference, and that it was an insult to the awful majesty of God to expect Him to answer our prayers for daily bread further than causing the sun to shine, the rain to moisten the earth, and the wheat to grow. She felt a repugnance to the manner in which some men spoke to God in prayer, with familiarity which seemed to her devoid of reverence, while she could only sometimes pray, and then with bated breath, and her whole being aglow with

admiration and intensest awe. But, then, she had never accepted Christ and worshipped God through Him she had loved, admired, and tried to imitate; but the Holy Spirit was revealing to her the Way and the Truth and the Life. She began to feel that this was what she needed. Christ was the heart of God made bare, living, palpitating, bleeding for her—the mighty love of God brought down to human focus, that our feeble conceptions might find a way through Him, upward, onward, to the Eternal One!

Like a flash of light it came, showing her own helplessness and need of such a power, and for the first time in her life she flung herself down upon her knees and prayed to Christ, acknowledging Him as the Divine Lord.

What individual accustomed to self-introspection could conscientiously attribute those marvellous changes he experiences, during the development of his soul, to mere chance? It is during great anguish or intense joy humanity is made participant of the divine. Our spirits grow by the evolution of material circumstances, tenderly and wisely governed by our Heavenly Father's love.

Mabel had been growing like an ivy plant within the shadow of the oak, putting forth weak little tendrils which had only grasped a straggling bush or rolling stone, till led by one faint streak of light a stronger branch had climbed its way, and twined around the mighty oak itself.

Mabel did not remain long with Mrs. Rathbone, who returned to the room after a brief absence, full of a mad project to surprise her husband at his office in the works, and demand to be taken to the Art Gallery, to view Sir Noel Paton's latest work. Mabel resisted all persuasions, even declining to remain for dinner, and after a rather

cold parting she left Eden Hermitage. She wandered about for an hour to kill time, and then knowing Ernest must be in the station by this time, she went home. She determined to shut herself in her father's study, and write a letter to Ernest telling him all.

Fortunately she had her Chubb key with her, and letting herself in quietly she proceeded to her own room and there divested herself of her wet garments, and was soon attired in a pretty, loose wrapper, the colour of a moth's wings. The house was unusually quiet, and Mabel was glad, for she concluded Dora and Martha would be seated in the little back parlour sewing. She could enter the study through the drawing-room, from which a door communicated. During her father's absence it had been opened and drapery gracefully arranged across the entrance. Mabel paused as she was about to enter, her hand on the curtains, arrested by the low, sweet voice of her sister, who was singing a hymn, and gently touching the zither. Her voice was unusually tremulous and pathetic, and the words Mabel had heard so often before seemed to apply to herself with a new meaning.

Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,

Lead Thou me on.

The night is dark, and I am far from home,

Lead Thou me on.

Keep Thou my feet ; I do not ask to see

The distant scene ; one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou

Shouldst lead me on ;

I loved to chose and see my paths ; but now

Lead Thou me on ;

I loved the garish days, and spite of fears,

Pride ruled my will ; remember not past years.

So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still  
Will lead me on  
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till  
The night is gone,  
And with the morn those angel-faces smile  
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

As the last note died away, Mabel's pent up feelings found vent in a loud sob, and drawing aside the curtain she entered the room to fling herself down at her sister's feet, but was infolded in Ernest's strong arms.

Mr. Rentoull had arrived soon after Mabel left the house in the morning, and heard at first with surprise and afterwards with amusement the message Dora had for him. He could scarcely come to a right conclusion, but fancied bashfulness was the real cause, and blamed himself for withholding his confession of love till the last moment. He at once told Dora of his affection for her sister, and how Mabel had received his avowal. He could not think of leaving her without another interview, that there should be no misunderstanding between them. "I will telegraph home, for I shall not leave Edinburgh to-day, but will return soon and wait here, if you will allow me, till Mabel comes. Should she arrive during my absence, please do not make her aware of my intentions, for fear my birdie escapes again."

It was quite natural that Ernest should cover his sweetheart's face with kisses, as she lay helpless in his arms, and it was quite natural that Dora should feel her presence an intrusion, so she slipped noiselessly from the room.

"Am I to expect this sort of treatment often," asked Ernest, with tender reproach, as he still held Mabel firmly in his strong arms.

"Please let me go, Mr. Rentoull, and I will speak to you," said Mabel.

"Never, till you address me properly. Were you trifling with me last night, Mabel?"

"No, oh no, Ernest."

"Then I have a right to keep you here, close to my heart, until you can be trusted to walk alone."

But Ernest was compelled to release her. The climax had come, and poor Mabel's over-strained nerves gave way at last, and burying her face in his bosom, she sobbed painfully. Ernest led her quietly to a couch and there seated her, drawing her head upon his shoulder, and supporting her with his arm. He waited till her fit of grief had subsided, then tenderly wiping the tear-stained face, he took her hands gently in his, saying, "When you can speak, dearest, tell me all your sorrow, that I may help you. Did you wish to avoid seeing me again, Mabel?"

"Yes."

"Why; can you not love me?"

"Yes; but I thought I could not pray with you.

"Would that interfere with your happiness?"

"Yes; it would be a barrier to its perfect completion."

"Are you convinced of that, Mabel?"

"Yes; thoroughly."

"Then I say, thank God."

Mabel raised her hitherto drooping eyes, to examine her lover's face, astonished at his reply, and met his calm, honest gaze. There was a look of happiness and sanctified joy upon it, which seemed to envelop her whole being and infold her troubled spirit in repose. Mabel always felt

thus with Ernest, whose master presence nerved and strengthened her.

"Your heart is being prepared, dear girl," said Ernest. "Some day Christ will reveal Himself to you, and life will have a new and glorious meaning."

"If you were always near, I should feel strong."

"Dear Mabel, our human props and aids will ever come and go, but when your faith has once laid hold upon Him, you are secure, you will never feel alone. Oh, stubborn little heart, put Jesus in His rightful place. make Him your strength. Ernest can wait."

"Were I to tell you that my life of doubt, of self-reliance and bold unbelief had ended in a prayer to Christ to-day, what should you say?"

"Another proof that God is gathering all into His fold. Dearest, let us celebrate the union of your soul to Him in mutual prayer."

They knelt together, hand in hand, and surely God would add His blessing.

"Are there any barriers now, my darling?" asked Ernest, a few moments later, as they stood side by side.

"Only one, our parting, Ernest."

"Let us intensify our present joy with sweet content, dear love. I do not upbraid you for keeping me another night and day."

"What, are you not going to-night?"

"No, sweetest, are you glad? Will you not let me hear you say so?"

"Ernest, dear Ernest, my cup of happiness is brimming over. I am bewildered with such sudden joy, I *cannot* speak. Love has turned to music in my heart—a grand, sweet, swelling Gloria—love, human and divine."



## CHAPTER XX.

### *MABEL OBJECTS TO JOIN THE CHURCH.*

THE harvest hymn had been sung in the churches.

The rich, ripe golden grain had been gathered into the barn, and the heart of every true child of God was bursting with gladness and virtuous resolve, as he tasted the bountiful gifts of the Creator, and acknowledged new proofs of His personal care.

It was evening. Mrs. Harrington's drawing room was decked in holiday attire. Pretty wreaths and sprays of poppies, wheat, and corn were arranged about the pictures and brackets on the walls, with "Welcome Home," "Fond Greetings," and suitable texts of Scripture. Over the study door, Mabel and Dora had erected a triumphal arch, and the curtains looped gracefully back revealed the desk where their loved father usually sat, and his reading lamp artistically trimmed.

A bright fire was burning in the drawing-room grate, making ghostly shadows about the furniture. A large white cat lay purring on the rug, and Martha sat dozing in an easy chair.

Concealed behind the curtains which draped one of the windows stood Mabel and Dora, their arms entwined about each other, whispering softly and gazing up at the clear sky, studded with bright stars. Mabel was reciting softly to her sister:—

“Thou seest yon heaven of stars—not man, the race,  
The multitudinous, crowded, scattered race,  
Seems more confused, more purposeless than that;  
Yet each particular orb hath its own course,  
And treads the ambiguities of space  
Unnervingly, because moved by the Law  
Which shaped its course and it, and is to it  
Necessity of motion. Fretful soul,  
Fretful because of freedom . . . .  
The time will be when we shall pace the heavens  
In glorious constellations like the stars;  
Blissful as they, but conscious of our bliss;  
Moved only by necessity of right,  
Which is the highest reach of a free soul.  
The time will be hereafter—might be now  
Did we obey the tide of that deep Will  
Beneath the turbid currents of our own,  
And take with joy the motion that He gives.”

“The poet’s idea of heaven,” said Dora, “is very sweet and lofty, but always somewhat vague.”

“And, sister mine,” said Mabel, “the Christian’s idea is so much clogged with the mire of material self that, like a bird whose wings are clipped, he fails to soar beyond his own tree-top. Can you give form to your idea of heaven, sweet Puritan?”

“Yes. Home; re-union; Christ made visible. And yours, Mabel?”

“Freedom; it is but another name for heaven. Oh, Dora, we are so caged in our own humanity. Do you not feel as I do, a yearning to be free—free from these carnal



longings; free from doubt and scepticism; free from prejudice and ignorance; free to rise up, leaving self dead in its natural clay, to mount up far beyond those bright and glorious stars, to rest upon the bosom of the Eternal God?"

"Yes, Mabel dear, I do often, very often, feel like that; but there the Bible comes to my aid, and I find it is while we are imprisoned in the flesh we can do great things for God. And we cannot expect freedom till we have won it. What seems to us a small circumference and narrow limit places within our reach duty to be done. I have a vision of the glorious Paul, himself 'a prisoner in bonds,' yet, with the strong arm of faith in his risen Lord, breaking the chains and making free the captives of sin. Dear Mabel, you have a poet's soul, but true sentiment must wear a meaner form, mix with and help to stay the awful woe of suffering, fallen man, ere it bursts into song."

Mabel smiled softly, and a look of great tenderness flooded her face as her sister finished speaking. "You are a matured Christian, my darling," she said. "I am only learning to walk; but I shall be more useful by and by, when I grow accustomed to the new life."

"None could charge you, dear, with lack of usefulness; but did your conviction of the truth bring with it no desire for Christian fellowship? Are you content to stay outside the communion?"

"Please, do not hurry me, dear Dora," said Mabel, gently. "The tender love which guided me so far will lead me to my proper place. I have not yet been in the church which I should care to join."

"I thought you liked our minister?"

"Yes, but I am not going to marry him," said Mabel, laughing softly. "I always am at schism. These things which you do without Divine authority, things which you fail to do though God commands, keep me outside. I know I have much to learn, but 'I must be ready always to give an answer to every man who asketh a reason of the hope that is in me.' Jesus was so consistent in His life and example, that I fail to see why the Church which professes to follow Him should ever dare add to or presumptuously take from His dear commands."

"We have nothing to do with the government of our Church," said Dora. "We meet there to worship and to praise God."

"It is not of its temporal government I speak, dear sister. When Peter in his eloquent sermon on the day of Pentecost convinced the Jews, and they cried out in the anguish of their hearts, 'What shall we do?' what was the answer? 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ,' 'and they that gladly received His word were baptized.' I am like these Israelites, I have been convinced, and, like them, desire to obey His command and His example, but in the Church there is no provision made. Dissatisfied I stand and wait, with a Saviour's tender reproach ringing in my ears, 'Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.' I ask, like Paul, 'Who can forbid water that these who have received the Holy Ghost should be baptized?' After I have been buried with Him in baptism, I shall then feel able to sit at His table."

"We were baptized when we were infants," answered Dora. "Do you doubt that fact, or does it not suffice?"

"Dear Dora, your spiritual training began as soon as

you could lisp a prayer. Your naturally pure and trusting nature took in the Catechism and the Bible and men's theology conglomerated into one as Gospel, all in good faith, because you trusted those who taught you, nor ever dared to question. Religion was a common necessity to you, as much as was your daily food, but my willful heart, stubborn with doubt, could only trust by starting at the Source itself, and there my trusting soul remains refreshed. You cannot blame me when I fail to find attraction in the little shallow streams meandering off."

"I understood that Mr. Rentoull led you to a knowledge of the truth," said Dora; "I was not aware that he held Baptist views."

"Nor I," replied Mabel; "he placed the Bible in my hand, with this command, 'Read carefully, pray frequently, and the truth will be made quite plain to you.' Perhaps he may have missed what I have found, for he has often said, 'The Bible is a mine of wealth a lifetime cannot exhaust; each time you seek, new gems will spring to light.' In one like Ernest, with his aversion to all creeds and ordinances of man, seeking and professing to be only a disciple of Christ, we look to find consistency, therefore, I think I can guess his answer. So now, my sister, you have heard my motive for not narrowing myself down to any sect just yet. But though I keep outside the visible church for a little while, I shall not fail to seek for grace and always try to follow where the Saviour leads."



## CHAPTER XXI.

### *THE TWO PRODIGALS.*

THERE had been great excitement and joy in the Harrington household for the last few days. News had arrived that Mr. and Mrs. Harrington were returning home, and the happy girls began to make the house as beautiful as they could. Their arrangements were only half completed when they received a note from Mr. Rentoull, informing them that their father had been prevailed upon to spend Christmas in London on condition that apartments were secured permitting the whole family to be together.

"I have only been half successful," Ernest wrote, "for I hoped to have had you under our own roof, but, my darling, we shall be able to meet often and have sweet and profitable conversations during the next few weeks."

So the Edinburgh house was closed, and instead of welcoming their father home, they were welcomed home by

him. Mr. Rentoull had made all the arrangements so complete that there was nothing more to be desired except the presence of Dora and Mabel in London. A comfortable suite of apartments had been secured in Clapham as near as possible to Ernest's father's house.

A severe attack of gout had prostrated Mr. Harrington on his arrival in London and left him very weak, but as soon as he was able to be up, his daughters and Martha were sent for.

I am greatly tempted to linger over this part of my story and give in detail the particulars of the departure of Mabel and Dora, with their faithful attendant, Martha.

They felt a little regret as they left the house, with all the furniture enshrouded in chintz covers, that their father would not see their beautiful decorations for his welcome home while they were fresh and gay.

I think I have said before I did not write this little book to amuse or entertain, but, if possible, to assist some one to grasp the truth, and if even one has been helped out of that awful sea of doubt and despair—my own barque foundered in so long—to reach the beacon light, Christ Jesus, the Way and the Truth and the Life, I shall be satisfied. I will leave my readers to fill in with their own imagination the bright, pleasant bits I am compelled to miss for lack of time and space.

Their arrival at Euston Station at night; the meeting between Mabel and Ernest, who was there to act as guardian; the stolen pressure of the hand; the whispered word of tenderness; the drive home to Clapham, through the busy streets, now bright with light, now dark with only here and there a flickering lamp. Past the Houses of

Parliament, brilliantly lit, suggesting to them the busy brains and tongues which work while others seek for rest. Past the fine old Abbey, sleeping in solemn grandeur, holding the relics of state and temporal power, and the ashes of monarchs who once sat in splendour ruling the empire, now mingling with the common clay of men. But men who *are* the kings, to-day—by merit, not by birth—poets, philosophers, statesmen, philanthropists, and preachers, whose dynasty will ne'er decay whose empire is the human heart.

Dora, fatigued by her long journey, was suffering from a violent headache, and lay back in the carriage patiently submitting to Martha binding a handkerchief round her forehead, sprinkled with menthol.

Ernest sat looking into Mabel's expressive face; her poetical nature was drinking all in as she sat gazing out, one hand resting contentedly in Ernest's, the other pressed against her heart as if to still its excited throbbing caused by the impatient yearning to look upon her father's face again. Once only during the long ride did she give voice to her thoughts, as crossing Westminster Bridge she strained her eyes to catch another glimpse of her favourite old Abbey, then at the long, still line of lights reflected in the dark water of the Thames, she exclaimed, "Look, Ernest, it is like the Bridge of Sighs."

Arriving at their destination, Mr. Rentoull managed to slip away quite unobserved, after rendering all the assistance he could with the luggage, concluding, with his usual delicacy and consideration for others, there would be less restraint if he were absent.

Poor Dora had to retire before partaking of the inviting

hot supper prepared for them. The long journey had made her sick and feverish, and her loving stepmother followed her with tender solicitude, bathing her tired limbs and rolling her in hot blankets. She afterwards sat at her side, talking gently to her, as she lay resting so happily on her soft bed near the dear mother she had missed so much.

But Mabel felt no weariness. Mr. Harrington was imprisoned in a large armchair, one leg extended, his foot resting on a gout stool, loaded with soft pillows, and on a low seat at his side, her hands clasped on his knee, gazing up into his face with a look, almost of worship, sat Mabel.

The dear head had grown venerable of late, the white hair looked like a halo round the face lit with peace, to which his present expression of love added glory as he bent tenderly down to speak, and gently stroked her hair back off her brow.

"I feel like the prodigal, Papa," said Mabel, "I have been feeding on husks and living among swine, but now I've got back to my father."

"There were two prodigals, Mabel; the elder has the most to answer for," said Mr. Harrington, sighing. Mabel's only reply was to cover her father's hand with kisses, then lay it fondly against her cheek.

"Oh, I have missed your counsel every day, Papa. The true and false are always hand in hand, and wear the same attire. It is hard to chose the right."

"Pray often, daughter, you will soon grow strong. You are but newly transplanted to the forcing-house—His Church—but with the tender care His husbandmen will give, you will be firmly rooted, grounded in the Truth. You will be amazed, dear child, how often there is sent a

special message, even unto you. God knows just what you need, and tells His servants what to preach. I believe as much in inspiration now as in the days of Paul. No man who has not been converted should ever dare to be a preacher. Every converted preacher will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, which will guide him what to say, and therefore every seeking heart will have what it requires; for if He cares for our temporal wants, how much more will He regard our spiritual. Half in shame, but most with humble thankfulness, I must confess I have seen more good resulting from my voluntary ministry during the last six months than in my twenty years of professed labour, because I could testify through personal conviction. I have been astonished at the manner in which I was at times forced to lay aside a carefully studied sermon, at the last moment, and preach from another text, as I thought, purely by accident, but, as afterwards shown, by Divine interference, proved by the testimony of one or more of my hearers."

"Must I unite myself to any sect, Papa; may I not keep outside and honour all alike? I am amazed that so many Churches rise, each claiming Christ as the Head, yet all differing and holding in their ranks some who with boldness live the lives which He condemned."

"Christ is the Church, dear child. These are but sections, parts of one great whole, and no more interfere with its perfection than do the niches and the aisles in your beloved Abbey. If you desire to serve Him, be a stone within the building; He will put you in your proper place. God's love overshadows all, and while you wait outside, you leave an ugly gap which you alone can fill.



Thus, you delay the completion of the purposes of Christ. We are the living stones which form His Temple, hewed and shaped and polished for our especial niche."

"Among the many sects, Papa, which do you think is the true Church, partaking most of Christ's own Spirit. You can guide me, I fail to decide."

"Listen, Mabel: In days of old, there lived a man who, from a valued hand, received a ring of priceless worth, which had the hidden virtue to render of God and man beloved he who in that faith should wear it, and giving him the claim to be lord of the house. For ages it had been bequeathed to the best and most beloved son, and all went well until the ring descended to a father who had three sons equally worthy and equally beloved. Desiring much to please them all, the father promised each in turn the ring, till death approached, and the good man grew embarrassed. Not wishing to disappoint two of his sons, and prove himself deceitful, he sent for a famous jeweller, and commanded him to make two other rings exactly like the first, and bring them to him. This the jeweller did, and so perfect was the imitation that even the father's eye could not detect the real one. Well pleased, he called his sons apart, bestowed on each a blessing and a ring, then died. Now came each son claiming to be lord of the house, each showing the ring his father gave him, and pronouncing the others to be false, because, to him, the father could not lie—the brothers must be forgers. Next rose strife and dissension, and to stay the feud a famous judge was called, but not even he could decide the difference. 'Yet stay,' said he, 'you say the true ring has the hidden power to render him of God and man beloved; let that

decide,—which of you three brothers love the most? You are silent; you are all deceived deceivers; none of your rings are true. Perhaps the real ring was lost, and to supply its place your father has had three others made. Go back to your home, and let each one set about to prove the virtue of his ring, in love, meekness, and true patience, and when a thousand years have passed, a greater One than I shall sit upon the throne and give his judgment.' Mabel, dare I claim to be that Wiser promised Man?"

"Oh no, dear Papa, but I am sure that you have found the Father's 'ring.'"





## CHAPTER XXII.

### *MAISMORE MANSION.*

THE suite of apartments which Mr. Rentoull had secured for the Harringtons was greatly appreciated, especially by Mabel. It was the middle storey of Maismore Mansion, a large, massive, solid-looking house, detached from its neighbours, and possessing numerous advantages of which they could not boast. One was the beautiful little patch of green which surrounded it, closed in from the other dwellings by a low—conservative—wall, thickly overgrown with ivy, grown bearded in its dotage, one of the few relics of the past allowed to remain in proof of its antiquity. Maismore Mansion had once been the centre of a beautiful park, till some enterprising speculative owner sacrificed what he considered superfluous ground to meet the demands of the ever-increasing population by erecting a score or more of little red brick villas, with tiny gardens in front, pailing off for each, gorgeous with rhododendron bushes, peony roses, and purple asters, leaving the old mansion, like a grim monarch at the head, looking more lonely because of its uncongenial surroundings.

The enterprising landlord had marked off the dimensions of his estate by planting a row of young limes at each side of the road facing the villas, and bestowing upon it the dignified title of Maismore Park. The pale green foliage was very bright and pretty, and gave a charming effect to the flimsy red and white villas, but looked weak and puny near the never-changing old ivy wall and the grand solid-looking mansion.

Maismore Mansion also possessed a garden behind, which gave its owners almost a royal precedence over the villa tenants, considering the enormous rise in the price of land in a neighbourhood so accessible to the city during the last few years. Only a little less than the time of which I write even this was encroached upon, and to enable the landlord to realize a few pounds more rental for his gingerbread villas he opened a gate from the outer side, providing the tenants with a key, thus making it a public garden, merely allowing the occupants of the old mansion the privilege of entering by their own back gate. But that was later, and the Harringtons had the benefit of the garden and its seclusion, for, though it was winter, Mabel loved to spend her spare moments there, and from the windows to view the fine old trees which had escaped the axe, looking gloriously wild, straggling, and unpruned.

The household of Maismore Mansion consisted of four persons—Edward Bond, Esq., professor of mathematics, his wife, and two servants. Professor Bond was a short, square-built man, with pale blue eyes always looking into vacancy, and a slight but continual movement of his lips, which always gave one the impression that he was adding up. Mrs. Bond was a most diminutive woman, with a

timid voice, which seldom rose above a whisper, and a motion of limb more like gliding than walking.

Priscilla, the female domestic, was a large, handsome woman, always in perfect order—wearing the prettiest print wrapper and the most coquettish little cap on the top of her chignon of luxuriant wavy red hair. There was expression in every movement of her well-developed form and comely face; there was a quick, bright glance from her clear grey eyes which showed that she was ever on the alert—more than compensating for her master's vacant looks and the whispered commands of her mistress, whose tongue, withal, was louder than her servant's, for poor Priscilla was deaf and dumb. And last, but by no means of least importance, was Sandy M'Pherson, the Ceylon negro boy, the indispensable Abdul, or, as he preferred to be called, Sandy—like many more native Indians who have served with Scotch masters, and who are tempted to lay claim to that race, and often renounce their own name for that of M'Pherson or M'Gregor.

Sandy M'Pherson really belonged to Professor Bond, for he had bought him during his visit to India, two or three years ago, having a great desire to possess a coloured servant. Abdul brushed the boots, cleaned the plate, was page, gardener, groom, and—clown for the neighbourhood. He was sly and cunning, but he loved his master and mistress dearly, and was thoroughly trustworthy where their interests were concerned.

How merciful is the Divine management of human affairs. I speak with all reverence of my Creator, and with the experience of one who is conscious of being daily the recipient of God's providence, and whose motto is,

"God in all and all in God." The little things—a word, a look, an impulse, a jest, a tear, all go to shape the great events in our lives. If we could appreciate this thoroughly, we Christians who pray for God's guidance, how we should sift our words, brighten our expressions, examine our impulses, strangle our jests, and value our tears. I often wonder what the loving Jesus thinks of us. We pray so earnestly for a blessing and reject it or startle with surprise when it comes. We speak of death as the entrance into life, and are prostrated with grief when we see the portals open to welcome in our beloved ones. This to me is the most inconsistent part of our Christianity. *If we believe in Christ's resurrection, why does death sting us?*

Had the events which I am about to narrate occurred a year ago, one at least of the characters would have been lost in despair. The human heart is like the soil, it must be ploughed and sifted and watered before it yields its fruit, whether that fruit be a rose emitting its fragrance in a garden, or a cypress tree bordering a grave.

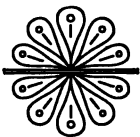
Mabel did not have much of her lover's company, alone. The fondly anticipated walks had to be postponed most frequently, as nothing would induce Mabel to leave her father's side. Mr. Harrington was very weak and was confined to bed. He had so much over-taxed his strength on the night of his daughter's arrival, not wishing to alarm them by finding him prostrate, that it resulted in a serious relapse. Mabel was almost selfish in her desire to do everything for her father, but yielded to his feebly pronounced command that she should allow Dora to take her place for a short time, morning and evening.

The most sacred and without doubt the most perfect

happiness is that which is born of grief, sanctified by faith in Christ. Most of my readers, who have passed the meridian of life, will help to bear out my testimony that the sweetest rest is found in the shadow. It is not the face that is illuminated with sunshine which experiences the most joy. Laughter may suggest merriment, but it is never a demonstration of matured happiness.

There was a kind of hallowed sanctity about this time in Mabel's life; she felt she was treading the borderland of eternity. "The gates were ajar," and her pilgrim father would soon enter in. She was catching some of the sweet, sad melody.

In later years, when she looked back on this period of her life, it was circled out from the rest by a glorious bow of promise. The sun was shining through the mists of tears, but every tear shone with the facets of the diamond and reflected the tints of the rainbow which God had thrown across her sky.





#### CHAPTER XXIII.

#### *ERNEST'S "SKELETON."*

ERNEST RENTOULL had thrown himself heart and soul into his work of preaching the gospel. The hall which he had secured in the vicinity of his father's residence had now become a recognised place of worship, and within its wall, assembled, Sabbath after Sabbath, a large and most influential congregation to hear the truth from the lips of the eloquent and outspoken young preacher. His admirers determined to build a handsome church and appoint him to be their pastor. They had already organised themselves into a body, and were unanimous in their cry to build; nor was there any lack of funds, but Ernest declined to be bound by the fetters of a church for a time at least. He would like to evangelize more than a little suburb, and besought them to find some one to take his place. He had already planted his flag in the east end of London, devoting Sabbath nights and most of his week night's to this busy locality. Had he doubted the sin-



cerity of those who rallied round him in what he called his home church, he now had proofs of the fruitfulness of his labours. He was followed by a glorious army of volunteers—some to work, some to preach, and some to sing—and their fervour was great.

Dora found ample scope for the exercise of her philanthropic spirit, but Mabel and her father could only listen and encourage. Mr. Harrington's wide experience, however, was most helpful to Ernest, and he accepted respectfully any suggestions from his reverend friend's lips. Every new convert and every new scheme was talked over and sanctified through prayer by this happy trio.

But poor Ernest had his weights to drag him down. God was blessing his efforts in a most marked and marvellous manner, but within his own home there was often strife. His worldly parents, especially his father, were dissatisfied with the bent of their son's inclinations. Only that he feared the effect of such conduct on his mother, whom he dearly loved, Ernest would have left the paternal roof.

Hints reached old Mr. Rentoull's ears that they were about to erect a magnificent church and appoint his son as minister. He therefore became somewhat reconciled, speculating on the probable stipend he would receive; it would no doubt be a handsome living, and though he was not the father of a bishop or a dean, it was a great deal better than one of those wandering Methodists or cold-water Baptists, into which he was always afraid his son would degenerate.

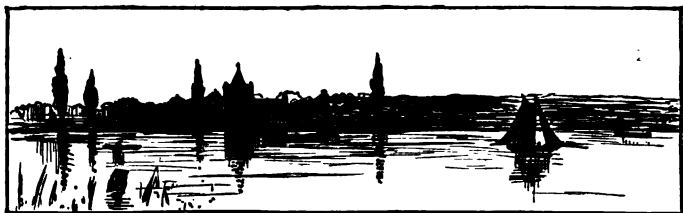
When the fact became known to him that Ernest had declined their offer, and had already opened a new field

among the London heathen, his rage knew no bounds, and a volley of unreasonable and ungentlemanly abuse followed; mingled with unjust accusations, hard even for Ernest, disciplined in Christian patience, to endure.

"Egad, sir!" he exclaimed, winding up one of his torrents of rage, "I deny that you are your father's son, but a scheming foreigner who has juggled his way into my family, what a mighty fool I was to waste a fortune on education to end in this. What education did you need, sir, to stand and howl at street corners? A parson, forsooth, a lazy, loafing, priggish lot of sneaks, growing fat on the sweat of another man's brow."

Ernest was not so unmanly as to add his personal grievances to Mabel's burden, but he was driven to spend more of his leisure hours in Maismore Mansion than in his own home, to the benefit of all parties.





#### CHAPTER XXIV.

#### *PROFESSOR BOND.*

I WOULD like once again to emphasise the fact that there is no such thing as chance in God's universe. There is purpose in all human events; there is Divine motive in everything. With the finger of faith, let us trace another instance.

Professor Bond was a phlegmatic Christian. His enthusiasm in things spiritual or temporal never rose beyond a languid "Not so bad at all," or an exclamatory interrogatory "Oh!?" His parents were *Christian* brewers. They had launched and floated a score or more of drinking dens in the great city, advertised as "paying little concerns" in the most populous districts. Their reputation was as sound as their beer, which was rolled into the publicans' cellars in barrels, and came out across the bankers' counter in sovereigns, dug out of the homes of the toiler; blasted by the curse of the drunkard; scourged

with the scalding tears of the innocent; and refined through the books of the banker.

Edward Bond's parents were Christians, honoured members of an Episcopal Church, and were careful to see that their babies' faces were sprinkled with water from the consecrated font before the altar and sent forward to confirmation in due time. With such care, and inheriting no pronounced evil tendencies, Professor Bond was a natural Christian, growing in rich soil, surrounded by favourable circumstances, removed from the taint of poverty, and secure from the snare of temptation. He attended Church every Sunday, and in the most apathetic manner mumbled over the creed and the litany, paid his contribution of pence, and went home content in the belief that here his obligation ended till the next Sabbath came.

Seldom a night passed without Mr. Harrington receiving a visit from Mr. Bond, and the conversations had a beneficial effect upon the Professor, who, though not a great talker, was a most attentive listener. Once he was invited to remain to family worship, and it now became a regular thing with him. His wife and servants were also invited, Abdul acting as interpreter for Priscilla.

The meetings were delightful. Mabel and Dora contributed some choice music. Ernest contrived, with few exceptions, to be present. Every one took an active part in the little service, and the responsibility of finding suitable readings prevented them from dismissing it from their mind, even during the busy practical daily life.

It would have been very strange indeed, if a little fruit had not shown itself among the foliage of the Christian

Professor's character. Religion began to have a new meaning. He found a heart beneath the trappings which men had wrapped round about it, a heart which came into contact with his own awakened interest and life. All these years, strange as it may seem, the Bible had been a sealed book to this Christian mathematician. Now he had been induced to search the Scriptures for himself, and interpret it with the wisdom he had received from God, according to the grace that was given unto him, and he stood amazed, awed, inspired, and humbled, not at its bewildering rites and ceremonies; not at its mystifying creeds, but at the beauty and simplicity of its doctrine; at the plain, honest religion of Christ. Self was being rapidly crucified in the presence of that Divine teaching, "Love your neighbour as yourself;" "Do unto others as you would be done by;" "Let every one please his neighbour;" "Put no stumbling block in another man's way;" "Bear ye one another's burdens." Oh, glorious Gospel; henceforth his creed would be to *do* as well as believe.

One night Ernest was about to leave the house, after one of their devout little family meetings, when Mr. Bond arrested him in the hall, with the request that he would spare him a few moments in his study. There was an earnest look in his hitherto listless grey eyes which aroused Mr. Rentoull's interest, as he followed him willingly.

"I am not a man of sudden impulses," began Professor Bond, "I prefer rather to sift and investigate before I agree to accept, but with no will of my own, I am conscious of a change in my spiritual experience flooding in upon my torpid soul, as sudden as the daylight bursts in upon the sleeper when the shutters of his chamber are unbarred.

I have heard you remark that it was the wealthy and the refined who need converting; let me add to that, our *preachers*. Mr. Rentoull, let me thank you for the life you have thrown into my soul. What I have found Christ to be to me, He is waiting to be to others. There are thousands, with the same spiritual apathy which I had, being fossilized by the preaching in our churches. I used to think conversion was for the heathen. God forgive me, I have been self-righteous. I do not ask you how I am to find salvation, I have found it, praise God; but how best to employ the remainder of my short life in *doing*, in atoning for the wasted, selfish years which have gone—I have at most but a few years left.”

The phlegmatic Professor had delivered this speech with a volubility of which Ernest did not imagine he was capable. Mr. Bond stood stroking his long grey beard, and now and then wiping from his eyes a suspicious moisture which kept gathering there. Ernest noted with sympathy his state of extreme nervous excitement.

“Mr. Bond, I must congratulate you,” said Mr. Rentoull brightly. “‘At eventide there shall be light.’ You deplore the probable shortness of your life; but measure it by the capacity you now have and you will find ample time to fulfil God’s intent in you. Do not seek to do much. Leave yourself empty, purified, and ready at the feet of Christ; He will not fail to use you. Take each little duty as it comes. With the new spirit and in faith, look up to Him; but above all trust Him. You have a glorious life before you, ‘Lo all things are become new.’ Sin and suffering and sorrow will henceforth have a new meaning to you. You will see all things through Christ, and there

is no lack of work. The harvest is ripe, but the reapers are few."

"On the contrary," said Mr. Bond, "I think the number of our churches is in excess of the demand of the population. I fear there is too much indolence among our clergy. Are we justified in bribing men to preach the Gospel? Our Saviour did not promise His followers that their lines should be cast in pleasant places, but He foreshadowed poverty, persecution, and tribulation."

"True, and to the seeing eye the work is plain. Could our clergymen show as marked proofs of their presence among men as the publicans can, we might rejoice, but there will always be an amount of indolence among our ministers as long as our pulpits continue to be filled by humanly, and not divinely appointed men, destined from their cradles by doting mothers and fathers for this *genteel profession*, too often without the example at home which should stimulate and enlarge the Christian soul. Its social advantages kept ever before their eyes, the desirability of winning this fine living and that fine church. The truth should make them free, but they are tied with golden bands, and dare not tell proud Pharisees their faults for fear of tithes withheld and censure given. As for the *poor*, they are made of coarser clay, the lash for them. Just mark, my friend, how splendidly they do reverse the practice of our Lord, who preached, "Woe unto you, ye scribes and pharisees, hypocrites." And to the despised poor, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

"Do you know, Mr. Bond, sometimes I shut my eyes

and try to imagine a world without Jesus. I see ignorance and strife, and tyranny and pomp, and oppression. The heathen hugging to his lips his idol, men fighting for a heritage, tyrants forging chains for their slaves, kings corrupting beneath the robes of splendour, helpless creatures fainting and dying for bread which the strong oppressor holds too high for them to reach. I hear the cursing and the praying, the shrieking and the laughing, amid the showers of gold and tears and blood; and in despair I cry, why was man created? Who can deliver us? The more I try to invent a remedy the fiercer grows the conflict, then my eyes are opened, and I see the Cross towering above the chaos man has made, and from its centre hear a prayer, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." It is a royal prayer. The Saviour of the world has prayed for sinful man, and from His throne the King of Kings regards, with tender pity, human woe. The heathen lays aside his idol. Man ceases to strive with man. The tyrant frees his captive. Kings smile beneath their crowns like men. And from the struggling crowd goes up a glad new song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." "He hath redeemed us to God by His blood." I open my eyes and look upon Jesus, and I see a new heaven and new earth. I see Him ascending from the Cross to God, and I hear the command which makes the attainment possible, "Be ye also perfect," now with the open eye of faith I can tread the thorniest way, in everything I look beyond to Christ."

Professor Bond's stolid looking face glowed with the illumination of a smile as Ernest paused, and he exclaimed, "I am attached to my church, but the offspring of my



long intercourse with her is soulless duty. I've yet to learn the sect you represent, I always claimed mine as the parent church, all offshoots prodigals to be condemned; but if their ranks hold men like you, I must desert to walk with zeal, with courage and consistency."

"I have not bound myself to any sect. I ask no other title than Evangelist. Myself, outside I can embrace you all, my password *Christ*. I do not wish to make schism. I do not deplore the number of our sects, they are essential to meet the varied tastes and intellects. The Christian family on earth best typifies the church. Capricious appetites and varied tastes do not exclude one child from the good Father's table, but calls forth larger bounties from His hand. What fattens you may not digest with me, but though you stomach flesh, do not condemn the fish, so grieve the loving parent who finds meat for all."

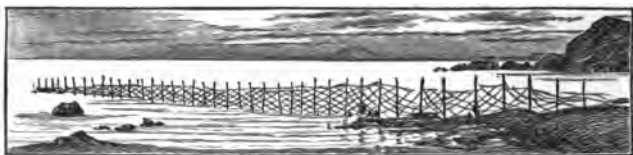
"I am glad to hear you advocating such broad principles, which are of Christ. I shall not hesitate to tender my petition. I own to feeling some compunctions, which have vanished, seeing my desires must harmonise with what you preach. I have felt somewhat surprised you give so little prominence in your discourse to baptism, an ordinance divinely shown. Your great consistency in all else; your downright earnestness; forbids the imputation that your mouth is stopped by fashion or convenience. I did not fail to search for flaws to carp at in your character, my only one is that you did not lay on me this obligation to be baptized. And even here I must admit you right. No doubt you wish for voluntary candidates. Conviction brings with it a sense of duty. Repentance

a desire to be obedient. I own that it is better we should be convicted by God's angel, conscience, than by argument of reason. What doth hinder me to be baptized?

I love my church, there is a solemn beauty in its ritual which helps my soul better than simpler forms; but I cannot foresee the influence it will have on me—and others who have waked from sleep—to find that they must seek outside the church for aid to follow Christ in His example, 'to fulfill all righteousness.'"

Now followed mutual confidence, surprising testimonies, pledged co-operation, all of which was sealed with the sanctifying seal of prayer. After which, at a not very clerical hour, Ernest Rentoull departed from Maismore Mansion.





CHAPTER XXV.

*"FOR EVER WITH THE LORD."*

CHRISTMAS had come and gone almost unnoticed in Maismore Mansion. Mr. Harrington was dying. The gout, which had afflicted him so much of late, had left his limbs and seized more vital internal parts, and he was hopelessly ill. After a week of most excruciating agony he now lay utterly powerless—dying as fast as the old year. His external appearance of calm was due to the exhaustion of physical power, but there was a calm and rest within no human suffering could disturb. It was hope in God; he would soon look upon the face of Jesus.

In the intervals of his suffering he had arranged all his temporal affairs; he felt no anxiety or care as to the well-being of those he was leaving—the tender love which had enfolded them hitherto would not be withdrawn now, and to each one he spoke a fond farewell, commending them separately to God, and bestowing upon each his blessing.

Perhaps he felt more sorrow for his daughter Mabel, whose grief was most intense. She had hoped so much for his companionship to live a new life at home, with their ripened spiritual experience enfolding one another and extending beyond themselves.

I cannot promise not to grieve, Papa," moaned Mabel, burying her face in his pillow, whilst her sobs shook the bed. "I do not love God less because I weep. I shall miss you; I dare not think of home without Papa; do not blame me for my tears."

"I do not blame you, daughter; sorrow is Divine as well as human: 'Jesus wept.'" Then drawing her face against his own he would gently stroke her cheek and speak words of comfort, directing her to seek for Divine strength, which was never denied to any.

Mr. Harrington requested that a watch-night service should be held beside his bed. Ernest, as a great surprise, had engaged a picked choir to sing beneath the window several of Mr. Harrington's favourite hymns, as the old year was dying.

Mrs. Harrington was seated by her husband, her lips compressed to keep back any sound of grief which might disturb his present rest. Every now and then she tenderly drew a feather dipped in brandy across his pale lips. Sometimes his eyes would open and look the gratitude and love he had not strength to speak.

Dora knelt by the bed in silent prayer. She had so knelt for more than an hour, and no one thought to move her. Martha sat rocking her body to and fro, her face buried in her hands, vainly striving to smother the sobs which now and then found vent, as she thought of his

lonely wife and the dear "lassies." Abdul, the Indian boy, was crouching upon a rug before the fire, two big tears glistening on his dark cheeks, and there was a look of awe in the quiet face turned to the dear sahib.

Mabel crept softly to the window, round which a large screen had been drawn, for it was partly open, the room being warm. The old year was dying; a short time and it would belong to the past. The year which had begun with separation for Mabel, was now carrying away still farther from her the father she so fondly loved; the year which had opened up for her such new vistas of truth and love; and yet, dare she repine? It had given her a faithful, noble friend and lover who had taught her to believe and trust in Jesus.

Mabel drew aside the curtain and gazed out at the night. The snow had been falling all day and it was now just ceasing. Beautiful, beautiful snow, gentle and calm and pure, falling so silent and soft, like down from the angels wings. Beautiful, beautiful snow, weaving a shroud for the earth, to cover all vileness from view, for the echo of the Christmas chimes still filled the air, proclaiming the birth of a Saviour for men. How lovely it looked and how peaceful. As the graceful flakes ceased to fall, myriads of bright stars began to twinkle in the far, far sky, and the moon threw a mantle of silvery light over the fair robe in which the new-born year would soon be dressed.

Oh, indescribable purity, how evident it is that man's hand is not in this. What will compare with the purity of untrodden snow? It had wrapped the old mansion in a deep and solemn stillness, as if nature was in sympathy with those within.

The door of the chamber opened softly, and Ernest entered. The lights were burning low. The fire-light flickered noiselessly about the room. Abdul turned his plaintive eyes to Mr. Rentoull, and pointed to the still form stretched on the bed, looking so stately, his venerable head crowned with its profusion of white hair. "Abdul is glad the good man's come to pray the Great Spirit to make dear sahib well."

"Perhaps the Great Spirit needs him, Sandy, and we dare not say Him nay." Ernest bent over the dying man, he was breathing gently, as if asleep. Mrs. Harrington motioned him not to speak, and pointed him to the window, where Mabel stood gazing up into the starlit sky, tears falling from her eyes like rain. Ernest folded his arms about her, and drew her head upon his breast, tenderly kissing her white brow and wiping away the tears as they fell; but never a word was spoken.

Suddenly Mabel started, the rich deep-toned bell of St. Paul's was heard with great clearness tolling the death of the old year, and with each solemn dong there burst a sob from every pent up heart.

Marching along beneath the avenue of leafless trees, clothed in that marvellous delicate garb of snow, moved a long procession, bearing torches, and singing as they came; their voices swelling and dying away in sweet surging waves of sound, flooding the midnight air, and thrilling the hearts of those who heard.

"For ever with the Lord!

Amen, so let it be!

Life from the dead is in that word;

'Tis immortality.

"Here in the body pent,  
Absent from Him I roam;  
Yet nightly pitch my moving tent  
A day's march nearer home.

"My Father's house on high,  
Home of my soul, how near  
At times to faith's forseeing eye  
Thy golden gates appear.

"My thirsty spirit faints  
To reach the land I love,  
The bright inheritance of saints—  
Jerusalem above.

"So when my latest breath  
Shall rend the veil in twain;  
By death I shall escape from death,  
And life eternal gain."

How near heaven seems at times, its golden gates are oft' ajar. How many glimpses we are allowed to have. Music, sunshine, flowers, and love; crumbs from the Divine feast in paradise, somewhat tainted when they touch our earth, yet even human hearts have kept these sparks divine, and cherished them to flames of light and power, on which their souls have mounted up to heaven, and through the open gates peeped in and looked upon the loveliness of God.

Mr. Bond had entered the chamber, with his wife and Priscilla. After seating them, he asked Mrs. Harrington, in a whisper, if he should dismiss the singers. Mr. Harrington opened his eyes and feebly shook his head. He requested faintly that they would raise him a little. Ernest and Mr. Bond, with great gentleness, lifted him to an almost sitting posture, propping him up with pillows.

Mabel seated herself upon the bed, and placing her arms beneath her father's head, laid it upon her breast.

Opening the Bible, Ernest read softly: "And I saw a new heaven, and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away: and there was no more sea." "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men and He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God." "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

With exquisite beauty the choir sang—

"Nearer, my God, to Thee,  
Nearer to Thee;  
E'en though it be a cross  
That raiseth me,  
Still all my song shall be—  
Nearer, my God to Thee,  
Nearer to Thee.

Not a sound disturbed the stillness of that chamber, save the ticking of a little timepiece, and an occasional sob from the women. Through the open window came the solemn tolling, at measured intervals, of old St. Paul's. As the singing ceased, Mr. Harrington gave a smile of approval, and murmured, "Abide with me," just as the beautiful hymn was rising softly on the air.

"Abide with me! fast falls the eventide,  
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide;  
When other helpers fail and comforts flee;  
Help of the helpless, O, abide with me.



"Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;  
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away,  
Change and decay in all around I see—  
O, Thou who changest not, abide with me.

"I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless;  
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness;  
Where is death's sting? where, grave, thy victory?  
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

"Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes,  
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies;  
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;  
In life, and death, O Lord, abide with me.

As the last verse died on the night, a long, deep, and final sigh burst from the tired pilgrim's lips, and, at the same instant, a peal of joyful music rang through the clear, cold air—sweet chiming bells ringing a welcome to the new-born year.

Ernest gently disengaged Mabel from her father—she had fainted away. Mr. Bond removed the pillows, tenderly laying the reverend head down. Martha lifted Dora from her knees and bore her unresisting from the room, while Mrs. Harrington flung herself, weeping convulsively, upon the body of her husband.

The sweet chimes had rung in a new-born year to man and a new-born soul to God.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

### *THE CHURCH ON THE ROCK.*

IN a Western suburb of London there has been erected a church which claims the interest and admiration of many.

Its style of architecture is Gothic, rich stained glass windows and exquisitely carved slabs filling its pointed arches. It is surrounded by a lovely green lawn tipped with daisies, intersected by well gravelled paths, and in a cluster of fine old thickly foliaged trees one of God's choir of birds have built their nests and make unceasing melody.

A merchant prince had spent half his life in gathering stones from every country, until he prided himself on having in his possession a sample of every stone the earth has yet revealed; inviting geologists and lapidaries to contribute if they were able.

His purpose was to build a mansion, which should stretch the gaping eyes of wonder and waken envy in the hearts of men; but after meeting Ernest Rentoull, *his* heart and plans were changed; and when dying, he left

his precious cargo of stones and all his princely fortune, to build this church, providing Ernest became the pastor and his sole trustee.

“Let all my stones,” said he, “be like a garment on its outer walls, and as they flash and sparkle with their varied powers—some dull and dead like clay, some rivalling the diamond in their glitter, the ruby in their colour, the pearl in their whiteness—so let God’s people gather to beautify its inner side, every creed and every class, excluding none, exalting none, give equal privilege to all. Make this your pass-word—*Christ; ‘Whosoever will, let him come.’*”

This text is conspicuous above the door. On either side are sculptured tablets. One represents Jesus bearing His cross, with the words below:—“If any would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me.” The other represents the baptism of Christ, with the words:—“Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.”

The church-board for intimations vouchsafes no information save—“All are welcome.” “Come unto Me all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

It is known in the neighbourhood as THE Church.

Strangers, passing, speculate as to its denomination. Catholics claim it because of its Cathedral-like windows and symbol sculpture. Episcopalians claim it because of its costly magnificence and its evidence of refinement and culture. Nonconformists claim it because of its broad “*Whosoever.*”

On entering, one is impressed with a sense of peace and restfulness.

A rich-toned organ in a gallery which faces the pulpit is playing softly, "Rock of Ages," as the people tread the matted aisles and seat themselves noiselessly in the cushioned pews. There are no railed off corners for the rich; nor that afflicting sight, half-cushioned pews. "All men are equal in the sight of God." In here all class distinction must cease. He is greatest who is most holy. Who dare claim to be the judge? It is a democratic church.

A large baptistry extends beneath the spacious pulpit, the candidates pass through the water making their egress to the outer hall. The baptistry is always filled, and the searching words appear in front of the pulpit—"Lo, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Acts viii. 36.

On either side of the pulpit stand two lovely palms forming an archway above the preacher's head, and on his desk choice cut flowers emit a sweet refreshing perfume. These floral contributions are distributed at the close of Sabbath-day to cheer the sick and aged.

At the back of the pulpit is a magnificent stained-glass window throwing a shower of lovely tints and mellowed beams across the church, resting with quivering fondness to kiss the fresh green palms and many-hued flowers, or weave a halo round the preacher's head.

This window conveys a depth of meaning in its pictures. On either side are seraphs bearing unfurled scrolls proclaiming that the church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets—Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. ii. 20); and on the others—"Know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John viii 32).

In the midst of the ocean—representing the world—there is placed a large rock, on which are grouped Faith, Hope, and Charity: figuring as the architects of the new church. Faith is pointing her sisters to observe her *plan* which lies unfolded on the rock. Hope holds the trowel and points to heaven, out of which an angel descends proclaiming:—"Ye shall behold the joy of My salvation."

Charity is kneeling upon the rock in the attitude of prayer. Her lap is full of gifts—a loaf of bread, a purse of gold, and a sleeping child—labour, wealth, and love. From the mouth of a cherubim these words are proclaimed:—"Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. i. 3).

There could be no fitter place to take leave of the companions of this story than in Ernest Rentoull's church. We may meet again, and perhaps know one another, and enjoy united fellowship in the Church on high.

Ernest has heard the command, "Thrust in thy sickle, and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe" (Rev. xiv. 15).

I need not give a more detailed account of Ernest Rentoull's labours, which were divided between two districts. He had an immense Mission in the East-end of London. He was largely aided by his wife, *Mabel*, Professor Bond, and a large army of volunteers. His popularity and fame were confined to the locality in which he worked, for he resolutely declined all posts of honour and titles of distinction, lest they should interfere with his sphere of usefulness. As his popularity increased, so too did his humility.

The saddest fact he had to face and master was the selfish inertia of his own class. His happiest hours were spent among the hard-working intelligent poor. And he told many a tale of self-denial and martyrdom to duty to his West-end hearers, and his object lessons were not lost.

Man's heart is like a well in a dry place, hard to reach, but once the spring is found it will yield ungrudgingly its precious treasure, and find itself no poorer. Ernest was not given to that morbid denunciation of mankind which extinguishes hope. He never lost sight of the image of the Creator in His highest work. He cut, and carved, and chisled at the stony human heart until he found the divinity within, concealed beneath material selfishness; then left God's angel, conscience, to complete the work with her keen pointed blade, probing and digging out the coarser clay which mars the face of truth, until out from the human sepulchre angels behold, arise, God's resurrected Christ.

Seated among the congregation we recognise the phlegmatic person of Professor Bond and his diminutive wife. The former has satisfied his conscience in obeying Christ, he was the first candidate for baptism in the church, to the great joy of "Sandy M'Pherson," who follows him everywhere like his shadow.

To the right of the pulpit is a pew, which contains all who are left of the Harringtons. Mrs. Harrington has joined her husband, and Dora, with her faithful attendant, Martha, has been persuaded to share the home of Ernest and Mabel.

Seated by the side of Mrs. Rentoull is a lady we have

met before; but scarcely know, attired in that—to her—unbecoming garb, widow's weeds. A second glance, however, decides us it is Vera Rathbone. Is this the pretty, gay, vivacious Vera, that fair scoffer, alas, how changed? Her heavy drapery of crape would do for masquerade, yet underneath the sombre veil, the girlish, dimpled, merry face is peeping out with added beauty. Sorrow has deepened, not deadened, her charming ways. The chastened heart has bent, and yields to try. With charming, half-coquettish grace, she came to Ernest with the sweet appeal, "Physician, I have come to try your cure, although the knife cuts deep, prescribe again."

During the five years which have elapsed since her beloved father left her side, Mabel has found a resting place for heart and soul.

She is a very necessary stone in the church. And when her husband asks her, as he often does, "Dearest, are you happy?" she twines her round white arms about his neck, and, gazing tenderly into his eyes, exclaims—"My Ernest, I have a good man, and a fond lover for a husband, and I have found the Father's ring."

THE END.

SELECT POETRY.





## POETRY.

---

- I. TO REV. D. WITTON JENKINS.
- II. HUMAN LOVE.
- III. DOUBT.
- IV. I LONG FOR THE BEAUTIFUL SUMMER.
- V. I *LONGED* FOR THE BEAUTIFUL SUMMER.
- VI. THE BIRDS.
- VII. MY BIRTHDAY.
- VIII. BABY'S LULLABY (DOROTHY).
- IX. "MERRY CHRISTMAS."
- X. A PARABLE, DEDICATED TO THE PASTOR OF THE  
CHURCH ON THE ROCK.
- XI. TO MY SISTER ON HER BIRTHDAY.
- XII. IN THE MOONLIGHT.
- XIII. WE'RE WEDDED NOW FOR EVER.
- XIV. BEAUTIFUL BABE OF MY LOVE.
- XV. "SCUDIE."



*To the REV. D. WITTON JENKINS.*

*Written at the close of two powerful sermons preached  
by him, Feby. 9th, 1890.*

OH, happy man, servant of God, how blest,  
For unto thee the power divine is given,  
To pierce the darkness of the human heart,  
Dispel the gloom, admit the light of heaven.

Thy words cut keen and deep, the sore place stings  
Like trembling patient 'neath the surgeon's knife;  
We see, laid bare and then cut out, the wound,  
And feel poured in the balm—eternal life.

One Pharisee—one “cultured sinner”—strayed  
To flowery fields, and scorned the narrow road;  
Mocked at the cross, whence flowed the fount of life,  
And shunned the path a Saviour's feet had trod.

Preacher, rejoice! Interpreter of God,  
Thy sighs, thy prayers, thy words are not in vain;  
E'en now the footsore wanderer hears thy voice,  
And, following, sees the light of truth again.

Toil on, thou faithful minister and guide,  
Thy task is sweet, with heaven so clear in view;  
Glorious the crown that waits for thee on high:  
Souls thou dost save add gems of lustre, too.

Pray that I too may join the happy throng  
Of the redeemed who give thee “welcome home”;  
Pray that I too may share our Father's smile,  
While angels sing, “Servant of Christ, well done!”

*HUMAN LOVE.*

---

**I** HAD a bunch of lilies once  
 So beautiful and fair,  
 Divine love shone on every leaf,  
 Sweet emblems of His care.  
 I cherished them with joy and pride—  
 Ah, me! my lilies died.

I had a little birdie once,  
 It sang so sweet all day,  
 God's sunny fields and rippling streams  
 Seemed not so far away.  
 To make its small heart glad I tried—  
 Ah, me! my birdie died.

I had a darling sister once—  
 God grant we soon may meet—  
 My lilies never grew so fair,  
 My bird ne'er sang so sweet.  
 I loved her!—friend, companion, guide—  
 Ah, me! my sister died.

*I have* a precious Book at home—  
 A pearl on every page—  
 It glows with promises which thrill  
 My heart to long for age.  
 O human love! O human trust!  
 Cease, cease to weep and sigh;  
 Eternal care is over all,  
 God's love will never die.

*DOUBT.*  

---

WEARY of living, too sinful to die,  
Longing for promised perfection on high,  
Lost in the black sea of doubt and despair,  
Crouching in tears, too faint for a prayer,  
Carried afloat by each fresh wind and tide,  
Stript of my anchor, no compass to guide;  
The dark mists arising will loose me still more,  
O, where is the beacon to point out the shore?  
O'er the dark waters a bright light is seen,  
Revealing beyond sweet pastures of green,  
But waves overpower me, and backward I turn,  
My faith is too weak to encounter the storm,  
Shunning the light which such dangers disclose,  
Fearing the darkness hides far greater woes.  
Jesus, my Saviour, who suffered for me,  
Guide my frail barque o'er this terrible sea;  
Be Thou at my helm, and with faith may I say—  
Thou art the Life and the Truth and the Way.

*I LONG FOR THE BEAUTIFUL  
SUMMER.*

---

I LONG for the beautiful summer,  
 Under the leafy trees,  
 To lie in the grassy meadow,  
 Fanned by the perfumed breeze ;  
 To see like angel's footprints  
 The flowers upon the ground,  
 To hear my Father speaking  
 In every summer sound.

The earth is radiant with sunshine,  
 All so freely given ;  
 Do these bountiful blessings  
 Ripen our hearts for heaven?  
 Alas! I am such a sinner,  
 Too worthless for a prayer ;  
 His glimpses of love o'erpower me,  
 How could I dwell with Him there?

O, when will our prayers be accepted,  
 "Our trespasses" all be forgiven,  
 "Thy kingdom" established among us,  
 "Thy will be done" here as in heaven?  
 When, 'stead of the lusts of the body,  
 Mankind shall his Maker adore?  
 When nations in unity dwelling  
 "Shall not learn war any more"?

*I LONGED FOR THE BEAUTIFUL  
SUMMER.*

---

I LONGED for the beautiful summer,  
To lie on the scented hay,  
Or to dream, near a sunny streamlet,  
The golden hours away ;  
To climb the perfumed hillside  
Kissed by the gentle breeze ;  
Or, at night, on the tide-washed shore  
To gaze o'er the moonlit seas.  
And, now I long for the spirit  
Of joy that has passed away ;  
For the sweet content that brightened  
The gloomiest winter day ;  
For the dear old trust in heaven ;  
For friends no longer nigh ;  
I shrink from the clouded future,  
And weep for the months gone bye.



*THE BIRDS.*

I LOVE the birds ! Happy birds, how they sing ;  
 At His gates, songs of praise caroling ;  
 When I'm weary, at my desk toiling long,  
 I am cheer'd very oft by their song.  
 Truant birds from the woods passing by,  
 I forget half my care when you're nigh,  
 The dew from the rose-bud still on your wing,  
 Kissed by the blue-bell, well may you sing.

Pent in the town, working hard all the day,  
 God and the blue sky so far away ;  
 So far away, all that makes the heart pure,  
 No wonder our life seems hard to endure,  
 No wonder we murmur oft and repine,  
 And crush from our heart every thought divine.

O, how we labour, and worry, and dread ?  
 Fearful we die for the want of bread ;  
 Yet, the tender Father above us all  
 Sees not unheeding the sparrow fall.  
 Ah! well may we treasure, like angels' words,  
 The light of the flowers and song of the birds.

MY BIRTHDAY.

---

ANOTHER birthday ; *tempus fugit !*  
 Half the journey nearly done ;  
 Every birthday is a landmark,  
 Each one marks me nearer home.  
 O, the journey makes me weary,  
 Heavy clouds obscure the sun,  
 Yet the path was so inviting  
 When the morning first begun.

I should like to lie and rest me  
 Underneath the waving grass,  
 Where the winds would sigh a requiem  
 Through the leaflets as they pass ;  
 Where the kindly dews would kiss me,  
 And the blue forget-me-not  
 Tell the passer how I fretted  
 Till I reached that quiet spot.

Will the pure delights of childhood  
 Ever wake my heart again ;  
 Must my epitaph be—Failure ?  
 Must all joy bear fruit of pain ?  
 Often when I'm backward gazing  
 O'er the paths which I have trod,  
 This worn heart becomes rebellious,  
 Even in the face of God.

Had the way not been so thorny,  
Then my feet had not been torn.  
Is it true the storm is tempered  
Even to the lamb that's shorn?  
When my soul was parched and fainting,  
Dragged to earth with dust and heat,  
Why was there naught round about me  
But forbidden fruit to eat?

Sometimes when at morn I waken  
To toil through another day,  
The awful thought comes rushing o'er me  
That, perchance, I've lost my way;  
For, I cannot hear the music  
That once cheer'd me on the road,  
And I only meet with strangers  
And I bear too great a load.

But when I am strong and hopeful,  
I can hear a tender strain,  
Stealing through the dark before me,  
Like the old sweet notes again;  
Then I try to struggle onward,  
Praying that the worst be past,  
And that God will fondly fold me  
In His sheltering arms at last.

*BABY'S LULLABY.**(DOROTHY.)*  

---

BYE-BY, little birdie,  
    Baby's gone to bed;  
On her snow-white pillow  
    Rests her golden head.  
Gentle sleep is coming  
    To close each bright blue eye;  
From the green trees, birdie,  
    Sing a lullaby.

Bye-by, little birdie,  
    Baby's gone to rest  
Like a little birdie  
    In its warm wee nest.  
The moon will keep her vigil  
    In the star-lit sky;  
Baby's tired, birdie,  
    Sing a lullaby.

Bye-by, little birdie,  
    Green trees, pretty flowers;  
You must sleep, like baby,  
    Through the quiet hours.  
When God bids fair nature  
    Return to life and glee,  
Birdie, waken baby  
    With your melody.

Bye-by, little birdie,  
 Baby's gone to sleep;  
 He who feeds the sparrows  
 Will our darling keep.  
 He will close His curtains  
 Softly, bye and by,  
 While His lovely angels  
 Sing a lullaby.

---

*"MERRY CHRISTMAS."*

---

"**M**ERRY Christmas! happy Christmas!"  
 Generous wishes how they flow,  
 Touching tender chords of memory,  
 Christmas days of long ago.

"Merry Christmas! happy Christmas!"  
 Once the wishes were not vain;  
 Once the world was filled with music—  
 Now all joy is mixed with pain.

"Merry Christmas! happy Christmas!"  
 Loving hearts who made it glad  
 Greet us not this Christmas morning,  
 And the stillness makes us sad.

Gentle Jesus, Teacher! Saviour!  
With our thoughts so full of earth  
We forget that Christmas morning  
Gave to Thee Thy mortal birth.

Mists of sin and passion blind us,  
Sutting out each sacred beam,  
Till we miss God's kind intention,  
Taking things for what they seem.

Give us back the faith of childhood,  
When we loved our Father's voice,  
When the smallest gift He gave us  
Made our trusting hearts rejoice.

Lead us, Heavenly Father, lead us  
In the paths which Jesus trod:  
Make this day a double blessing,  
Birthday of our souls to God.

Then shall dawn one golden morning,  
When our spirits free'd shall soar,  
To enjoy a glorious Christmas  
With the loved ones gone before.

*A PARABLE.*

—  
*Dedicated to*  
*The Pastor of the Church on the Rock.*  
 —

TOSSED out from the ocean of life,  
 All bleeding and torn she lay  
 Catching hold of the shifting sands,  
 Earnestly longing for day,

They told her, those friends on the shore  
 Trying to beckon her back :—  
 Her worm-eaten barque could not stand,  
 Mud hiding many a crack.

It sailed in the shallows so grand,  
 That bravely she smiled adieu,  
 So proud of her bright-painted barque—  
 Sure it would carry her through.

She longed for the wide open sea  
 To battle with wind and wave ;  
 But shunning that Light on the rock,  
 Split on the rock there to save.

O, could she but crawl from the waves—  
 Streaks of the morning had come,—  
 How gladly those friends on the shore  
 Would lead her in safety home.

Not far was a church on a rock,  
 To it for shelter she'd flee,  
 And slumber awhile on a grave  
 Safe from the sound of the sea.

To reach it, that journey, how long !  
 Crawling o'er sand and through caves ;  
 And what was she striving to reach ?  
 Rest !—in the shadow of graves

[O, seek ye for rest weary heart ?  
 Not *there* will close aching eyes ;  
 Each grave holds a corpse once alive,  
 The ghosts of the *past* will rise.]

Those duties she'd failed to fulfill  
 Gazed with a horrible glare ;  
 Pleasures stript now seen to be sin,  
 Fixed on her familiar stare.

Love rejected—wisdom despised,—  
 Turning life's soiled pages o'er,  
 Where might have been songs writ in gold,  
 Blotches and stains—nothing more.

O, better the ocean's wild waves—  
 Listen that terrified cry,  
 Her solace turned into a curse,—  
 Even the dead cannot die.

When now the full day should have shone,  
 Mists rose, the sunlight to mock,  
 Shutting out all else but the tombs  
 And old Church up on the Rock.



Mighty thought ! She'd climb up the steep  
 Out of the fog into day,  
 Perchance she might *rest* in the church—  
 O, it was so far away.

The Rock was so rugged and high,  
 Her feet were bleeding and torn ;  
 How she longed for a human voice,  
 Yet fearful to hear her own.

She would call, some one might hear ;  
 She had trusted in self too long.  
 "Mercy! Save! I perish alone!"  
 Hark! voices answer in song.

Forgetting her poor bruised feet  
 She rises to strain her ears ;  
 Ah, yes ! 'twas the song of the Church,  
 Frozen eyes melted to tears.

They knew a tired soul was waiting,  
 Weak, heavy-laden, oppressed ;  
 No need to ask those within it  
 To "Come unto Me and rest"

They meant *her*, what use else that Church  
 Closed round by a great high rock ?—  
 Poor tempest-tossed souls like her own,  
 She'd climb to the door and knock.

Knock ? every portal stood open,  
 Blazing in gold o'er the door  
 "Enter in," and still they sang "Come";  
 O, she would wander no more.

How bright were the faces within,  
 Their garments, how pure and clean;  
 While hers were all spotted and torn,  
 She'd turn, her rags would be seen.

Yet see what a banquet was there,  
 White cloth o'er the table spread,  
 How she hungered—if she could hide  
 And snatch a morsel of bread.

That mantle would cover her rags,  
 Some one had laid it down there;  
 Yes, now she looked just like the rest,  
 She would kneel like them in prayer.

They're singing it "over again,"  
 She's resting; but not in peace,  
 Worse than a stranger among them,  
 Wishing their singing would cease.

Why don't they curtain the windows,  
 Shut out that horrible glare?  
 Even the cloak does not hide her,  
 The Preacher knows she is there.

He tells of her life on the sea,  
 Her boat all gaudy with paint;  
 He tells of her wreck on the beach,  
 All muddy, bleeding and faint.

He may tell of her life on the sea,  
 Her battle with wind and waves;  
 But, O she must scream out aloud  
 Again at the open graves.

He's pointing His finger at her,  
 Speaks of her "mantle of sin,"  
 He says—"Like a thief in the dark  
 She climbed the rock to get in,

"Had she chosen the narrow path  
 She could have come by the gate."  
 She dare not go back again, now  
 She was seen, "too-late! too-late!"

"Give me bread and let me go out,  
 Away from that Preacher's face;  
 Yes, back to the fog and the tombs,  
 Out of the glare of this place."

She covered her face with her hands,  
 Her mantle fell to the ground;  
 The Preacher still pointed to her,  
 His voice had a gentler sound.

"*You* may eat of this bread of life,  
 The banquet for *you* is spread;  
 But not till your garments are cleansed,  
 Made pure at the Fountain Head."

*Her* garments would never be clean,  
 Died by the waves on the shore,  
*Her* body could never be healed,  
 'Twas aching, and bruised, and sore.

"Reject not the offer I give,"  
 His mercy is plenteous, free,  
 Don't wait to be dragged to the stream,  
 Rise gladly, "Come unto Me."

"The Saviour is waiting for you,  
 Have faith, trust, meekly, and go,  
 Those garments now crimson with stains,  
 Will soon be whiter than snow."

All trembling the woman arose,  
 But feeling too weak to stand  
 Till the Preacher came kindly down,  
 And firmly He held her hand.

"Courage, suffer for Christ," he said,  
 "Trust Him, be faithful and true,  
 Soon now thou shalt eat of the bread,  
 'Jesus will carry you through.'"

"Step into the waters, be brave,  
 Your Saviour went through before;  
 O think, 'twas His blessed command,  
 He waits for you on the shore."

A sweet sound of singing arose,  
 Waters rolled o'er like a sea;  
 Fear! no, it was joy! and they sang,  
 "Light in the valley for me."

Perfect peace has entered her soul,  
 She fears not future or past,  
 She sits at the feast with the wise,  
 Clothed, in her right mind at last.

*TO MY SISTER ON HER BIRTHDAY.*

---

SWEET Sister, had I but thy gifted mind,  
 Which roams so oft through Genius' fragrant bowers,  
 Returning with, encircled on thy brow,  
 God's choicest flowers.

I might, upon this day thy birth has blessed,  
 And I shall treasure in my memory,  
 Have brought sweet gifts, proof of my tenderness,  
 Worthy of thee.

What can a sister give? poor as thyself!  
 A father's love our only portion is,  
 Yet wealth enough, methinks, when flowing from  
 A heart like his.

Most little minds are pleased with little things,  
 The childish heart bounds at a doll or kite,  
 What decks the outward form, to woman, most  
 Will give delight.

But, to a soul like thine, whose choice would light  
 On what will most adorn thy jewelled mind  
 A sister's love will please—the purest gift.  
 That I can find.

We never can forget our past lone life,  
 When far from home and all that gives delight  
 'Mid strangers caring little what our lot  
 We had to fight.

O, were you not made doubly dear to me,  
 As from your eye I kissed the glistening tear,  
 Or heard in gentlest words sweet comfort given  
 My heart to cheer ;

Or, when upon your bed, pale, sick and sad,  
 I clasped your feeble hand within my own,  
 And feared, yet dared not speak, that even then  
 The pulse was gone ?

When blighted hopes, false friends, and scanty purse  
 Made life seem drear, for we so hard had striven,  
 I could have died ; but felt remaining still  
 Sister and Heaven.

And have we not till now together lived,  
 Our tastes, our cares, our joys, in one combined ?  
 Through Time and all Eternity, ours are  
 Twin hearts entwined.

Oft when my love too prodigal has roamed,  
 Attracted by some painted joy from thee,  
 How soon I sickened there, and found thy breast  
 A home for me.

Sweet sister, may a life of peace and joy  
 Bestrewn with fortune's rarest gifts be thine,  
 And ever streaming o'er thy path through life  
 May love's star shine.

*IN THE MOONLIGHT.*  

---

THE beautiful moon is shining bright,  
Flooding the earth with her silvery light,  
As she did on that unforgotten night  
We walked round the bay together.

Love, you're like the moon, I like the earth,  
To what beauty I have, your light gives birth ;  
When your face is hid from my longing view  
This bosom is shrouded in darkness too.

O, life is so dreary without you, dear,  
Living on dreams of when you were here ;  
But my heart wakes up from its load of sorrow,  
I shall see you my darling again to-morrow.

I shall clasp your hand, I shall hear you speak,  
I shall pillow my head on your loving cheek,  
I shall kiss your eyes and your beautiful brow,  
To-morrow, to-morrow ! O would it were now.

Suppose, ere the moon has paled in the sky,  
With this longing for thee in my heart, I should die ;  
You would kiss the lips that were freed from sorrow  
And nothing should part us, love, after to-morrow.

*WE'RE WEDDED NOW FOR EVER.*

---

YOU said, one glorious summer eve  
 And stars shone out to hear you,  
 "There's naught could make me love thee less  
 Whatever clouds were near you ;  
 So I'll be true and you'll be true,  
 Though fate may often sever ;  
 Yet I am thine and thou art mine,  
 We're wedded now for ever."

And through my heart the music stole,  
 Thy voice alone can waken ;  
 Ah me ! 'twere hard indeed if love  
 Like this, on earth, was shaken.  
 Dear heart, the clouds are round me now  
 I could not live much longer ;  
 But thy fond arm, mid all the gloom,  
 Supports and keeps me stronger.  
 And I am true and thou art true,  
 Though miles so cruelly sever ;  
 "Yet, I am thine and thou art mine,  
 We're wedded now for ever."



*BEAUTIFUL BABE OF MY LOVE.*

*Tune—"Beautiful Isle of the Sea."*

*A LULLABY SONG.*

---

**B**EAUTIFUL babe of my love,  
 Smile while no sorrow distresses;  
 Still from His mansions above,  
 Jesus His little flock blesses.  
 Slumber my beautiful babe,  
 Angels their vigil are keeping;  
 Slumber my beautiful babe:  
 Lovely is innocence sleeping.  
 Oft of thy future I dream,  
 Mingled with sorrow and joy;  
 Conqueror of fortune and fame,  
 Beautiful, beautiful boy.  
  
 Slumber my beautiful babe,  
 From trouble and danger secure;  
 Too soon my darling must wake,  
 The storms of this life to endure.  
 Oh! could I ever, as now,  
 Be near thee to love and befriend;  
 Smoothing the care from thy brow;  
 But God will my baby defend.  
 Oft of thy future I dream,  
 Mingled with sorrow and joy;  
 Conqueror of fortune and fame,  
 Beautiful, beautiful boy.

Be brave my beautiful boy,  
Be not disheartened by sorrow;  
Gather your sunbeams to-day,  
Trust not too much in the morrow.  
Kneeling in prayer near thy bed,  
Down from mine eyes sorrow streaming;  
Bathing thy young golden head  
And face with innocence beaming.  
Oft of thy future I dream,  
Mingled with sorrow and joy;  
Conqueror of fortune and fame,  
Beautiful, beautiful boy.



"SCUDIE."

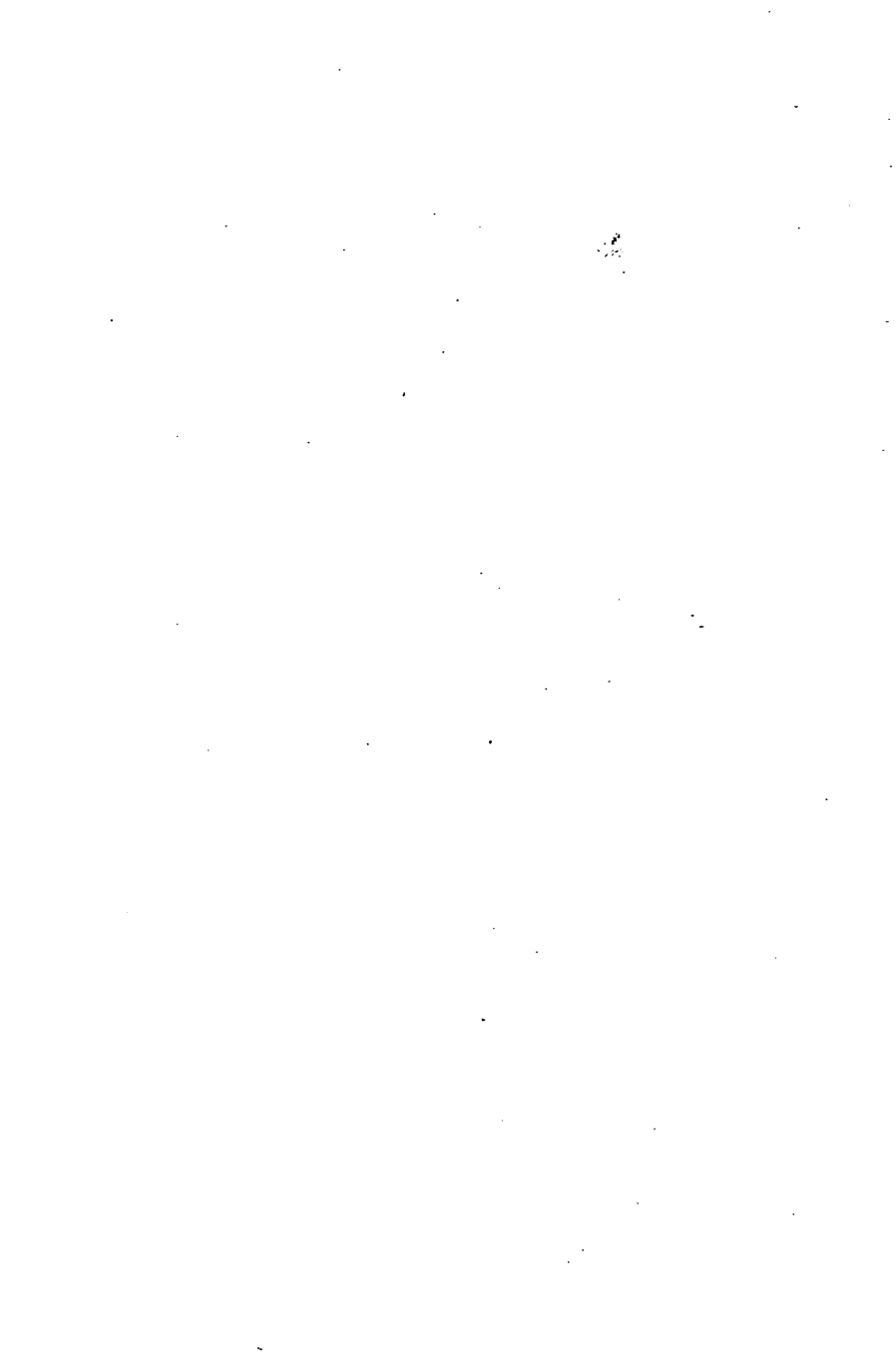
O! glad New Year,  
 Sweet harbinger of daisy-tinted Spring,  
 Tell me what cheer  
 For this near hope forsaken heart you bring.  
 Thy parent year  
 Has carried with him to his tomb, the past  
 Most I held dear;  
 One link alone remains, and this the last  
 To keep me here.

I saw thee born,  
 Night wore her richest garb to welcome thee;  
 And gentle morn  
 Sent forth a deputy of silvery clouds  
 To wait thy birth;  
 God lit His brightest moon and stars on high,  
 Illuming earth.  
 And angel eyes peeped laughing through the sky  
 While shouts of mirth  
 Rang through the pure, still air, man put aside  
 For that short while,  
 Or strove his haggard, care-worn face to hide  
 Beneath a smile.

O! poor humanity, we try so hard to be content,  
 And seize on each new chance to escape the past  
 So oft misspent;  
 And feign would bribe the new born year with vows  
 Broke ere the morn.

I stood alone ;  
 No father near to fold me in his arms  
 And kiss my tear stained cheek ;  
     No sister dear  
 To kindle higher hopes, and comfort speak.  
     O, yes, alone,  
 For thou art gone, sweet sister, where, ah, where?  
     The Great Unknown  
 Has called thee to Himself, I may not share  
     Those joys with thee.  
 Twin souls we were on earth, together trod  
     The weary road,  
 Thy gentle soul has winged its way to God,  
     While I toil on.  
 Oft stumbling by the way, weeping and faint,  
     Now thou art gone.

    O, spirit fair,  
 Lovely on earth, too bright to picture now  
     Tell me if *there*  
 A memory of human love and joy  
 Thy soul can thrill.  
     Our tender vows,  
 Made for eternity, has death dissolved,  
 Or, may thy angel lips say *sister* still?



Stanford University Libraries



3 6105 005 147 108

STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES  
CECIL H. GREEN LIBRARY  
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305-6004  
(415) 723-1493

All books may be recalled after 7 days

DATE DUE

--	--

